THE WORLD / A20

FBI starts probe
of 14 firms in subprime lending

THE WORLD / A20

US House passes
$146-B economic stimulus package

NEWS / A2

Palace looking
for P75B to fund stimulus package

NEWS / A5

Ex-Erap official
Eki Cardenas cleared of Oakwood raps

Villar wants 'mega' Pangilinan to join NP

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

NOTING HOW SEN. FRANCIS PANGILINAN could readily fill up the Araneta Coliseum with his "Mega" crowd-drawing power, Senate President Manny Villar yesterday invited the Wednesday Club colleague to join him in the Nacionalista Party.

FULL STORY A3

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, January 31, 2008 ★★ 2 sections | Vol. 22 / No. 53 P18 www.inquirer.net

GMA sons lead drive to oust JDV

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S SONS have told her allies to back off from the move to topple Speaker Jose de Venecia, but her sons—Representatives Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo of Pampanga and Ciocalada "Dato" Arroyo of Camarines Sur—are purportedly in the thick of the action.

Mikey Arroyo hosted a meeting on Jan-

STORY A3

Neri, Lozada keep affidavits for their safety

Testimony of 2 execs also put on videotape

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IN CASE THEY ARE harmed, former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri and his longtime friend, Rodolfo Noel "Boy" Lozada Jr., have recorded what they know about the ZTE broadband scandal and other cases by putting them in writing and on video, three sources told the Inquirer yesterday.

Sen. Mirriki Lacson said later sources from "here" in Senate in [illegible] told the Inquirer in separate interviews that Lozada had told them that he and Neri had executed separate affidavits and videotaped their testimony for their protection.

What they refused to tell the Senate about his conversation with President Macapagal-Arroyo was contained in the affidavit, according to school source.

MORE LOZADA A4

DOUBLE TROUBLE Commission on Higher Education Chair Romulo Neri and Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr. (close-up, above) and in a poster (right) in his Philippine Forest Corp. office, located inside the compound of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority in Fort Bonifacio, also have separate videotapes recording everything the Palace does not want people to know about the ZTE deal.

Rodolfo Noel I. Lozada, Jr.

A new 'tolman' is in town

Senate issues arrest orders; Lozada flies to London

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Juliet Labog-Javellana

FOR DEFIANCE, A SUBPOENA to appear yesterday at a Senate hearing on the scrapped ZTE deal, Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr. has been ordered arrested by the blue ribbon committee.

Lozada, president and CEO of state-owned Philippine Forest Corp., was supposed to tell the hearing what he knew about the deal, including how much he (allegedly) went to powerful officials for every signature obtained for the project.

Citing death threats and Malacañang pressure, Lozada flew to Hong Kong yesterday two hours before the Senate resumed its investigation of the $329-million contract for the National Broadband Network (NBN) project awarded to China's ZTE Corp.

The blue ribbon committee also ordered the arrest of Romulo Neri, the director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) when the government awarded the $(illegible) contract to ZTE last year.

Lozada, a longtime friend of Neri's, had reportedly served as Neri's unofficial consultant at Neda, which allowed him to know about the ZTE deal and other big ticket projects of the government.

Lozada told a friend that he was sent by his superior, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza,

LOZADA A4

McCain wins Florida; Giuliani set to withdraw

MIAMI—SIX MONTHS AFTER HE WAS removed from the political dustbin, Sen. John McCain won a breakthrough triumph in the Florida primary and emerged as the clear front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination ahead of next week's coast-to-coast contests.

McCain eased past chief rival Mitt Romney on Tuesday night following a tough battle in which the two traded accusations and insults. McCain has now gained the upper hand going into the Feb. 5 national contests—the so-called Super Tuesday that could decide the Republicans' White House nominee.

MCCAIN A8

CAMPUS CLASSROOM Students have been attending classes inside this tent in Barangay Tolenada in Guinobatan, Albay, since their old school was destroyed with volcanic materials streaming down Mt. Mayon when Supertyphoon Reming hit in November 2006.

Middle-aged? Welcome to the misery club

PARIS—HAPPINESS IS U-shaped. We are happiest at the start and end of our lives but in a slump when we are middle-aged, according to British and US researchers.

The researchers—economists from University of Warwick, Warwick/England, and from Dartmouth College, New Hampshire—looked at data on the mental health of [illegible] million

MIDDLE-AGED A9

PLDT employee surfaces, denies attacking gov't

By Alvin Paga

AN EMPLOYEE OF PHILIPPINE LONG Distance Telephone Co. confirmed yesterday that it was he in the picture released by the Department of Justice wearing a fireman's uniform outside the Peninsula Manila on Nov. 29, 2007.

But Pete Pinlac, president of the PLDT Rank and File Workers Union, denied that an Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez had claimed, he was "shooting investigators" at the government in the course of urging people to join Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, who were then holding out in the hotel.

PLDT A8

Army works as security agency to mining firm

By Tarra Quijano
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE Army is serving as a security agency to a mining subsidiary of a conglomerate that is involved in a dispute with another mining firm over a forestland area being proposed as a part site in this (illegible), Zambales.

A memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Army's 7th Infantry Division and DMCI Mining Corp. (DMCI) confirmed the deal to protect at least 3,700 hectares of [illegible] land.

May. Gen. Juanito Icomo, 7thID/Eastcol, on Wednesday said he signed the document in July 2007. "We have to support mining companies because they make contributions to the economy," he said.

Under the agreement, DMC-MC was "appointed operator" of Hi Amin Strategic Resources Properties Corp. and CRAE Mineral Resources Corp., and "will employ Special Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit Active Auxiliary (SCAA) to guard the company premises."

DMCIMC asked the Army to "activate SCAA to fill up the [illegible] country requirements." The 7th Infantry Brigade has deployed an officer, 11 soldiers and 75 SCAA groups to the mining area, Icomo said.

The special guards will "render security services, maintain peace and order, guard and protect the

ARMY A8

Second
FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Isabela/Cagayan	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Iloilo	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Catarman	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy

3D FOUR DIGIT
1 22 2 1 1 7
SUERTRES
1 0 7 3 6 4
MEGALOTTO 6/45
11 13 15 20 31 36
₱33,239,464.20

3 dead, 24 hurt in GenSan blast

AN EXPLOSION RIPPED THROUGH A FISH processing plant in the southern Philippines yesterday, killing three and injuring 24 nearby workers, officials said.

The blast by General Santos City overturned near the gates of the Philbest canning factory, near a packed motorcycle, as workers arrive for changing shift, and many were milling around, police said.

"We're still trying to investigate what is the cause. We still don't know if it's a bomb or an accident," Chief Supt. Belisario Bantigue, the regional police chief, told The Associated Press.

A policeman on duty at the city police headquarters and mobile reports gathered from various hospitals showed three dead and 24 injured. One of the fatalities died on the side of the road, he added. AP

WHAT'S INSIDE

BERROYA SACKED as LTO chief, will return to DOTC
/A7

Economic team wary of P75-B stimulus plan

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo is considering a P75-billion spending package to help shield the Philippines against an economic slowdown in the United States, officials said yesterday.

The President will meet with the Cabinet today to discuss the proposal of Albay Gov. Joey Salceda and draw up possible funding sources, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya told reporters yesterday.

Salceda, an economic adviser to the President, yesterday said Ms. Arroyo had approved the proposal in principle when he presented it at a Cabinet meeting last Tuesday.

"This is a one-shot package designed as a proportional response to the [looming] US recession," he said.

The figure of P75 billion is equivalent to one percent of the country's nominal gross domestic product, Salceda added.

Not said

Andaya admitted that government's economic team was not fully sold on the proposal, fearing that the budget deficit could balloon higher than targets, just as what happened during previous stimulus plans.

Andaya said the government approved a P65-billion package in 1999 during the Estrada administration to counter the effects of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, and in 2001 with a P60-billion pump spending spree.

But Salceda insisted the planned package would not affect the government's target of having a balanced budget this year.

If approved, Andaya said Congress would be asked to pass a supplemental budget by March, with P15 billion each allotted for infrastructure projects, income tax relief to the middle class, and P15 billion to build farm support facilities.

Salceda proposed using government royalties from the Malampaya offshore natural gas field and the sale of government corporate assets, like the Food Terminal Inc., to finance the subsidies.

Moody's mood

However, he said the government would have to explain the package to the international credit rating agencies to assure them that the government was not faltering with the tax reversion.

Moody's Investors Service last week raised its outlook on Philippine ratings to positive from stable citing the government's easing dependence on external financing.

However Moody's warned that the Philippines "will continue to face considerable challenges in sustaining progress to strengthening its fiscal position."

Salceda submitted the proposal to protect the export-dependent economy from Asia's looming recession in the United States.

While he noted that the package could push back the administration's goal of a balanced budget by a year, Salceda said there is no other way but to shift gears in the face of a global economic slowdown.

"The principal threat posed by a US recession to [the Philippines] is loss of momentum which would negatively impact our revenue base if we do nothing. Once you lose it, you lose it. It would take time and lots of lost opportunities, many effort and resources to restart a stalled engine," he said.

Salceda has suggested that the government postpone the goal of balancing the budget until 2009. *AFP and Kristine L. Alave*

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WRONG ASSUMPTIONS

BIR short of '07 target

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE said it collected P712.089 billion in taxes in 2007, falling short of the P783.9-billion target.

Revenue officials partly blamed the P53.8-billion shortfall on the "unrealized macroeconomic assumptions" that were used to set the 2007 tax collection target.

For instance, the BIR claimed that the target was partly based on the assumption that inflation, the increase in consumer prices, would settle between 4 percent and 5 percent, but actual inflation rose for 2007 was only 2.8 percent.

The slower increase in prices means slower-than-expected collections of the value-added tax, which is a sales tax on goods and services.

The BIR is the biggest earner among revenue agencies and its performance has a big influence on government's ability to meet its fiscal targets.

Despite the huge BIR shortfall, however, the government still managed to over perform in its goal of reducing the budget deficit last year. This was achieved mainly through the aggressive selling of many unused assets which served to offset the tax collection shortfall.

The government has set a goal of reducing its deficit to P63 billion in 2007, from P68.8 billion the previous year.

But the Department of Finance said the deficit for 2007 was likely to be much smaller than the target, with the official estimate to be announced next month.

The official figures on the government's fiscal performance for 2007 will be announced next month.

The government raised P80 billion from the sale of state-owned assets last year. Of the amount, P25 billion came from the sale of its shares in the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp., P1.2 billion from the sale of the old do-its airport property, and about P1 billion from the sale of its minority stake in the Philippine National Bank. The remainder came from the sale of the government's remaining stake in the PNOC-Energy Development Corp.

For 2008, the BIR has been directed to implement measures to enhance tax collection and has been given a collection target of P845 billion, which is 16 percent higher than its 2007 goal.

Given the 2007 shortfall, the agency is said to be already complaining that the 2008 target is unrealistic. The BIR source the target to be set at P800 billion.

Budget chief hit over debt service

THE FREEDOM FROM DEBT Coalition yesterday took budget secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. to task for saying that the debt service rate made by lawmakers in the 2008 appropriations law was contrary to law and to the government's bid for a balanced budget this year.

FDC secretary general Milo Tarriela said that Andaya was "deceiving" the public when he said the entire P155.9-billion cut in the interest payment allocations was a violation of the automatic debt service provision in the Revised Administrative Code of 1987.

"Only P5 billion of this amount is covered by the automatic appropriation [and] has no debt servicing. This P5 billion is embedded in the special provision to the unified budget suspending interest payments on loans secured with bond and securities pending renegotiation or readjustment [of] terms," Tarriela said in a statement.

Lawmakers justified the reduction in the debt servicing budget, saying the appreciation of the peso against the US dollar has resulted in P15.9 billion in savings.

At the same time, Tarriela assured the government he shares "underspending."

Andaya had said that "[I]t's our policy to have a balanced budget this year so we will have to reduce [budget realignments] with the existing policy. At the very least, we would have to control that kind of an expenditure. We will not spend it, even if it is provided for, for it will affect our fiscal position. . . . It's so good in reining it."

Tarriela countered: "It is lamentable that Secretary Andaya uses a distorted information strategy in the name of a 'balanced budget' while hiding the policy of underspending that much needed services just to appease credit-rating agencies as well as lending institutions."

FDC said even some of President Macapagal-Arroyo's key economic managers did not agree with such a policy last year, the group detailed, both Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and National Economic and Development Authority chief Romulo Neri recognized that underspending was a serious problem. *Jerome Aning*

Gov't sells its P9-B Meralco stake to GSIS

THE GOVERNMENT HAS SOLD ITS 12.03-million-14-percent stake in the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) to the Government Service Insurance System for P9.9 billion.

Cabuenas Legaspi, the finance undersecretary for privatization, said "the [government's] step closer to the goal of generating P30 billion this year from the sale of its assets.

"Having sold this to a GFI [government financial institution] means the shares are still government-owned," Legaspi said in a phone interview.

Winston Garcia, the GSIS president and general manager, said the purchase of the Meralco shares has increased GSIS's stake in the power firm to 20 percent.

"Investing in Meralco is a wise move because investment in the power sector is really seen to have great potential for generating income," Garcia said in a separate phone interview.

The GSIS earlier said it wanted to beef up its equities investments, which amounted to P5 billion before the purchase of the Meralco shares.

Following the sale of the government's entire stake in Meralco, Legaspi said the government sees target it to sell the remaining real estate property of the Food Terminal Inc. in Taguig. The property occupies a total land area of [illegible] hectares.

The government's aim of raising P30 billion from privatization this year is in line with its target of balancing the budget after a decade of experiencing deficits. *Michelle V. Rosca*

Pinays being used as drug couriers

THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY IN CHINA yesterday warned travellers against drug syndicates operating in various parts of Asia and using Filipinos as drug couriers.

Philippine Ambassador to Beijing Sonia Brady issued the alert in a letter sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs following the arrest of nine more Filipinos suspected as couriers in Guangdong province and Beijing in a span of three weeks.

Brady stressed that smuggling prohibited drugs in China was dangerous, more so if it was in exchange for money.

She said the arrest of nine Filipinos brought to 22 the number of Filipinos arrested and detained for alleged drug smuggling since February 2007.

"The arrest of nine Filipinos in Guangdong province and Beijing in a span of three weeks is nothing less than alarming," Brady said.

The embassy earnestly hopes our kababayans (countrymen) would heed the Philippine government warnings and not allow themselves to be used as drug couriers by unscrupulous "friends" working for syndicates involved in drug trafficking into China, she stressed.

Brady said that all those who had been arrested claimed that were requested to carry the "parcels" by friends they met in tourist points or another country such as Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Vientiane, Macau and Kathmandu. Cynthia D. Balana

Neri, Lozada keep affidavits for their safety

From page A1

Pilares Neri told her about the P200-million bribe offer by then Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos, Mr. Arroyo and something in the office. "I guess in the bribe[but] approve it (the ZTE proposal)", the third source who is a civil society leader told the lawyers.

This source confirmed that his longtime friend Lozada had showed him his affidavit late last year during the Senate hearings on the $329-million contract for the National Broadband Network (NBN) project awarded to China's ZTE Corp.

The NBN project was aimed at linking government agencies with local government units via a high-speed and high-capacity telecommunications network.

Trusted friends

Another source said the duo gave trusted friends copies of their affidavits to be disclosed "in case something bad happens to them."

Neri and Lozada also told other friends about their affidavits and videos for their security.

Neri and Lozada reportedly informed some Malacañang people about the affidavits and video as a warning to them publicizing exculpatorily harm them.

The affidavits reportedly narrate the tale of corruption in the NBN and other government projects, and the high officials and other personalities involved.

President's instructions

One source said the Lozada affidavit include the details of President Macapagal-Arroyo's instructions on the ZTE deal, which Neri refused to divulge to the Senate.

A civil society leader, who is a longtime friend of Lozada's, told the inquirers that he saw the lawyer's affidavit where he narrated details of the ZTE scandal, including parts of Mr. Arroyo's conversation with Neri.

Lozada was summoned to testify in the Senate because he supposedly knew about the ZTE scandal as he was Neri's personal consultant at the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) assigned to evaluate proposals to undertake the NBN project.

"Both of them have an affidavit and testimony on video against [the] Senator to whom the other entrusted his," Lozada said yesterday.

He said Lozada, chief executive of state-owned Philippine Forest Corp., told him about these during their first meeting after he arrived from Singapore in December last year. He said he asked for a copy but Lozada declined.

"They continued what they know about the ZTE and other projects," Lozada said.

No affidavit

He sought out Lozada last year after his name was mentioned at the Senate hearings and Lozada met with him several times in classes for possible appearances at the hearings on the ZTE deal.

But Neri denied he made an affidavit.

"I'll come out," he said when asked by the inquirer. Asked if he knew about Lozada's affidavit, he said: "I wouldn't know."

Neri earlier testified in the Senate that then Commissioner on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., who was believed the ZTE deal, offered him a P200-million bribe so he would approve the ZTE proposal to undertake the NBN project.

Neri, now head of the Commission on Higher Education, refused to follow Abalos' instructions. Mr. Arroyo instead after he told him of the attempted bribery.

Dr. Nemenzo, whose company offered to build the broadband network but failed to get the contract, said Lozada had told him about the affidavits the night before he flew to London on Wednesday.

"Yes, he has an affidavit and the other copy is with another person," Dr. Nemenzo said, but Lozada declined to show or give him a copy.

Dr. Nemenzo's company, Amsterdam Holdings Inc. offered to build the network on a build-operate-transfer scheme, while ZTE Corp., a state-owned firm listed on the Shenzen and Hong Kong stock exchanges, proposed to set it up using concessional loans from the Chinese government.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and ZTE vice president Yu Yong signed the $329-million NBN contract on April 21, 2007, to concessions announced by Ms Arroyo.

The President scrapped the contract on Oct. 2, 2007, amid allegations of overprice and bribery that came to light as a result of the Senate hearings last year.

The civil society leader told the inquirers that Lozada showed the affidavit to him sometime late last year when the Senate hearings were conducted.

Lozada told him he contacted the affidavit "to save something happens to him."

Lozada also showed the affidavit to a few other people.

The civil society leader said the affidavit mainly contained what the President had asked this to proceed with the NBN project despite knowing that Abalos had offered him P200-million.

Amid the scandal, the President scrapped the ZTE deal.

No special treatment

Lacson claimed that Lozada had backed off because of Malacañang pressure and death threats but Estrella said Lozada should not be given special treatment by the Senate simply because it has not been proved that his life was at risk.

Aside from Lozada and Neri, other government executives who were invited but skipped the hearing were Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and his assistant secretaries, Elmer Soriquez and Lorenzo Formoso III. Only ousted/ex Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez showed up.

The officials' witness, Dr. Warren, decided not to attend after hearing of Lozada's flight abroad. Dr. Nemenzo, in his letter to the Senate, called for the "full closure" of the NBN probe to facilitate the completion of the investigation by corporate expert and its referral to the proper authorities.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, chair of the blue ribbon committee investigating the scandal, joined with nine other committees, said the while the hearing already had "99 percent" of the information it needed to finalize its report, it would have to wait for Lozada before deciding whether to end the investigation.

Mendoza asked the Senate to get an independent panel to review the costing of the supply deal with ZTE Corp.

He expressed confidence that his office had conducted due diligence on the scrapped NBN contract. As a telecommunications project, the proposed NBN is under the supervision of the Department of Transportation and Communications.

Mendoza noted that the Senate had said it would tap an independent panel to evaluate the NBN deal but instead accepted an evaluation report submitted by Dr. Nemenzo without any expert did not get the NBN project.

In the report, Dr. Nemenzo claimed that the project requirements were overpriced.

Mendoza said that the Nemenzo evaluation report "should be carefully examined as a result of propaganda" for evident bias and partiality issues, lack of verifiable basis, lack of acknowledgable sources of data, lack of sound evaluation methodology and for arriving at results and conclusions not supported by submissions in other venues."

In a statement, ZTE said it was unfair to the company for Dr. Nemenzo to be allowed by the Senate to convene a panel of industry experts, supposedly in order to "critique" analyses of no bidding.

"This is simply because his position as a rival of ZTE in the aborted Philippine NBN project precludes any objectivity on his part or the nonchalant attached to the so-called panel," the Chinese firm said.

ZTE said it offered the Philippine government the best NBN network for the least amount of money. With reports from Jerome Aning, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Reuters, Agence France-Presse and Alec T. Gil, Cherdito

Senate issues arrest orders; Lozada flies to London

From page A1

to London after he turned down an alleged order to lie at the Senate probe of what he knew about the overpricing and bribery in the NBN project, which sought to build a broadband network linking government agencies and local government units nationwide.

But Atienza denied Lozada was ordered to leave the country to prevent him from talking.

He said Lozada was attending the "Global Fuels Conference and Exhibition" in London, adding that Lozada filed for a travel authority on the second week of this month.

"The travel document is around the conference and later on to meet with stakeholders [ex biofuels] and he will be away up to Feb. 7," Atienza told the inquirers.

At the hearing yesterday, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada threatened that the Senate is prepared to ask the Senate to impose its authority over Lozada and order his arrest upon his return to the country.

"He (Lozada) must stay abroad forever for all I care so long as (he) he does not return to the country," said Estrada.

Estrada said the Senate should treat the testimony of Lozada from himself instead of hearing it from other people because Lozada would not want to cooperate.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. concurred with Estrada, saying that the arrest order would force Lozada to show up and reveal what he knows. He believed was his "strategic knowledge" of the ZTE deal.

Sen. Mar Roxas said it was about time that the Senate put its foot down on the frivolous and inconsistent and continued defiance of its summonses. "We will become an inutile institution if we allow the executive to have it's way in our investigations," he said.

Travel authority

Lozada's supposed Secretary Executive Secretary Edwardo Ermita in a letter dated Jan. 29 that Lozada would not be able to attend the hearing because of his trip to London (she presented a travel authority as evidence of Lozada's official trip).

But Sheikh Lacson insisted that the arrest warrant could be issued against Lozada from coming back to the country.

Sen. "Joey" de Venecia III, who blew the whistle on the ZTE deal, said a distraught Lozada came to his house at 10 p.m. on Tuesday telling him about the death threats he said he has family had received after it was reported that he would testify at the hearing.

De Venecia, son and namesake of the Speaker, had gotten to know Lozada after he was assigned by Neri to evaluate the company's proposal to undertake the NBN project.

Threats

Lozada, 45, told De Venecia days he had received letter and phone calls threatening him, his wife and their children. Lozada has five young children.

One message went like: "Mon nuvin kung saan ka nalinawig, dong aam mag saved ang mga ciad ako (We know where you live and where your kids study)."

De Venecia, who also said he

also received death threats for exposing the alleged overprice and payoffs that attended the ZTE deal, said he told Lozada that it was the price they had to pay for telling the truth.

He said Lozada told him he was planning to resign his post as consultant of Neda to be able to attend the hearing because of his trip to London (she presented a travel authority as evidence of Lozada's official trip).

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De Venecia, who also said he

Unfair

Sen. Mike Arroyo, who had reportedly quit at Lozada's, who the one who told De Venecia to stop pursuing the NBN project.

Arroyo's spokesperson, Ray Rimban, said it was not in the nature of the President's husband to spit on the face of any one.

"The allegations are simply unfair, untrue, unfounded. It makes a mockery of the man who backed off this time, away from the public eye while justly helping the poor and the needy," Rimban said in a statement.

Lacson said Lozada was willing to testify for the country.

He would have talked about the corruption which he said he would. Lozada accepted had it been pegged at P70-million but when he learned that the padded amount was unconscionable, he told Neri about his misgivings," he said.

Reconsider

Neri said he was hoping he would not be arrested.

"I'm hoping that they will reconsider," he told the inquirers when asked if he would submit to the arrest order.

Neri earlier already filed a petition in the Supreme Court against the Senate's order for him to appear again at its hearings.

Neri filed last Dec. 6 a special civil action for certiorari against the show-cause order issued by the Senate blue ribbon and two other committees investigating the deal.

The high tribunal issued a Jan. 15 resolution asking the Senate committees to comment on Neri's petition.

At a hearing last year, Neri told the Senate that then Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., who was believed the ZTE, offered him P200 million to promote the proposal of the Chinese firm.

Neri invoked executive privilege and refused to testify on whether the President had

Villar wants 'mega' ...

From page A1

Villar made the offer after Pangilinan complained of what he called Liberal Party's "hostility" in a leadership shakeup reportedly stemming from his rift with the LP president, Sen. Mar Roxas.

"I have always told him that our doors at the Nacionalista Party are always open for him if he feels that he is not wanted anymore in the LP," Villar said in an interview with the inquirer, a day after the LP named former Sen. Rodolfo Drilon as its new chair.

"He will be a great addition to our party because (LP's) Pangilinan ang is the only one that can fill up the Senate," Senator-Senate Pro Tempore Villar said, alluding to Pangilinan's title, days his outgoing Shadow Cabinet.

Villar said he had long been telling Pangilinan his impression that the LP is a "monarchy."

LP is monarchy

"The Liberal Party is just Mar Roxas and Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada (Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada)," Villar said, adding that

PCGG to face judgment

By Christine O. Avendaño

A DAY AFTER THE GOVERNment lost with finality its bid to seize four companies of tobacco magnate Lucio Tan, Malacañang yesterday said it was set to undertake a performance review that would determine the fate of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) and its commissioners.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said there was no need to judge the performance of PCGG "on the basis of that case," in reference to the decision of the Supreme Court to allow to Dec. 7 ruling finding no basis for the PCGG's sequestration of Tan's and several other people's shares in four companies.

Positive recovery

"We cannot make judgment just on one case or two cases because there may be several positive recovery that PCGG has made to overcome the loss of the case...," Ermita told reporters.

It will be the Office of the President that will conduct the performance review of the PCGG, he added.

Asked whether the Palace will consider calls from Congress to abolish the PCGG, he said: "We have to look at—till—until record of the conduct of the PCGG, how much it has recovered against the cases it has lost. And it for will be the basis of determining first whether there is a need to change all the commissioners or altogether abolish the PCGG."

But he said he was sure that "something was being done right now to look at the performance of the PCGG."

Erap exec cleared in Oakwood mutiny

By DJ Yap

RAMON CARDINAL A FORMER Estrada administration official accused of involvement in the failed July 2003 coup, has been absolved of the charges by a Makati court.

Makati Judge Oscar Pimentel dismissed the coup d'etat case against Cardenas for lack of strong and substantial evidence.

The bail bond on Cardenas, who was deputy executive secretary during Estrada's short-lived presidency, was also canceled.

Cardenas was accused of allegedly conspiring with the self-styled Magdalo group of junior officers who seized the Oakwood serviced apartments on July 27, 2003, in an attempted coup.

His case was supposed to be consolidated with that of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, one of the Magdalo leaders, and the other junior officers, which is still pending before Pimentel's court. However, Cardenas asked to be tried separately.

On July 28, 2003, a search conducted on one of Cardenas' two houses in Makati's Dasmariñas Village, yielded high-powered weapons and ammunition, as well as red armbands.

Cardenas, however, said he was not occupying the house which was being raided out.

"Granting that he [Cardenas] allowed his house at Hacienda Heights to be used, evidence must be adduced that he knew what it would be used for, and absent any evidence as in this case, that he knew, liability cannot be imputed against him," Pimentel said in the decision, dated Jan. 17.

State prosecutor Juan Ponce Enrile, a member of the panel that prosecuted the case, said "we respect even if we disagree with the decision."

He said he believed the evidence adduced was more than adequate to establish Cardenas' involvement in the failed uprising.

"We will study remedies, such as the filing of a petition for certiorari before the Court of Appeals," Nieves said.

CARDINAL in detainee's shirt after his arrest.

DOH: Have faith in doctors, too

By Kristine L. Alave

HAVING FAITH IN GOD IS good, but leave some of it for your doctor, too.

This was the message of Health Secretary Francisco Duque III to sick patients who go to "healing priest" Fr. Fernando Suarez. Patients should not rely on faith healing alone. They should avail medical help, too, Duque said.

In an interview yesterday, Duque said the health department does not frown on Fr. Suarez. He noted that Suarez's healing conventions have lifted the spirits of patients as well as their families.

"Personally, I don't see anything wrong with it. It's faith healing. It's going to enhance the Gawilan," the health chief said.

However, Duque said patients should also seek medical help—even if they have been prayed over by Suarez. They should not forego their treatment, the health secretary said. "They must take care of their health," Duque said.

FR. SUAREZ

DUQUE

"They have to see a doctor to understand the problem, the diseases," he added.

Suarez has been holding "healing conventions" in various provinces in the country where he is greeted by massive and hospitable crowds.

Some patients who have attended the priest's Mass reported "miracles." There are stories of cripples being able to walk, blind patients being able to see.

Despite these reports, Duque reminded the public that the health department has not recorded any evidence directly linking faith healing to full recovery.

Revealing in Pandakayang

Suarez is scheduled to hold a healing Mass at the Divine Mercy Church in Mandaluyong City on Thursday. Anticipating heavy crowds in the Shaqlin Circle, the city government has advised motorists to avoid the area.

According to the city government's press announcement, they will close both lanes of San Francisco St. from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursday. Half of the lane will be opened in the afternoon.

Vehicles going to Makati City from Boni Avenue and Shaw Boulevard will be rerouted to San Rafael and E Cruz Streets. They can also take Nueve de Febrero St. to Coronado Pantaleon St.

Motorists from Makati going to Edsa Crossing will also have to avoid Shaqlin Circle by taking Coronado St. to Nueve de Febrero.

Vehicles from Boni Avenue to Edsa-crossing are advised to use Libap and Ilac Renato Streets.

Motorists to Balintawak will have to take San Rafael Street and make a right turn to Shaw and Libap Streets.

Melo can't take over Comelec yet

By Christine O. Avendaño

HOLD YOUR HORSES, MALAcañang has not yet submitted the appointment papers of former justice Jose Melo as newly designated Commission on Elections (Comelec) chair.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, at his weekly press briefing yesterday, said the top Comelec position will be vacant only on Feb. 2 when the term of office of resigned Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos officially ends.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will then submit his nomination paper to the Commission on Appointments, he said.

"And until the CA acts on it, Melo cannot just take over and actively act as chairman," he told reporters.

The executive secretary also said that he still did not know when President Arroyo will name the two new commissioners of the poll body. But it will be soon because two commissioners were set to retire this month, he said.

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

TO HER EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO:

A MESSAGE OF THANKS...

DEAR MADAM PRESIDENT:

THE DAVAO ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS (DACS) AND THE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN REGION XI, SINCERELY **THANK YOU** AND THE **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION** THROUGH **SECRETARY JESLI LAPUS** FOR RETAINING THE GUIDELINES OF THE ***EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTING PROGRAM (ESC)*** AND THE ***EDUCATIONAL VOUCHER SYSTEM (EVS)*** AND RAISING THE SUBSIDY TO P5,000 FOR SY 2007-2008.

YOUR DECISION TO MAINTAIN THESE PROGRAMS, GUARANTEES THAT CLOSE TO 500,000 STUDENTS ANNUALLY WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE AND FINISH HIGH SCHOOL. THIS ALSO MEANS SUPPORT TO ALMOST 2,000 PRIVATE SCHOOLS MOSTLY SERVING IN PROVINCIAL AREAS NATIONWIDE.

WE REAFFIRM OUR BELIEF THAT THE ***ESC*** AND THE ***EVS*** ARE MOST EQUITABLE AND COST EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO EDUCATION.

... AN URGENT APPEAL

WE EARNESTLY ASK THAT THE ***ESC-EVS PROGRAMS*** BE MADE MORE EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS BY:

- **IMMEDIATE RE-ISSUANCE OF GUIDELINES TO ENSURE THAT EVS VOUCHERS ARE DISTRIBUTED ON TIME TO INTERESTED PUBLIC ELEMENTARY PUPILS BEFORE THE END OF SY 2007-2008 AND WARRANT 100% UTILIZATION OF ESC SLOTS FOR SY 2008-2009**

- **RAISING FURTHER ESC-EVS SUBSIDY FROM P5,000 TO A MORE REALISTIC LEVEL OF P7,000 OR AT LEAST EQUAL TO THE PER CAPITA COST OF EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

- **INCREASING THE ESC SLOTS AND BASING IT ON THE FRESHMEN ENROLLMENT RATHER THAN ON NUMBER OF GRADUATING STUDENTS**

- **ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION OF QUALIFIED PRIVATE SCHOOLS BY ENHANCING THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED BY FUND FOR ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE EDUCATION (FAPE), RATHER THAN USING LEVEL OF TUTION FEES AND PROXIMITY TO COLOR CODED PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS AS CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION**

- **RELEASING ESC-EVS SUBSIDY TO SCHOOLS WITHIN THE FIRST QUARTER OF SCHOOLYEAR AS PROVIDED FOR BY RA 8545**

- **IMPLEMENTING THE SALARY SUBSIBY TO QUALIFIED PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS AS PROVIDED FOR BY THE *GASTPE LAW***

...AND A MANIFESTATION OF SUPPORT

MADAM PRESIDENT, WE GIVE FULL SUPPORT TO YOUR CALL TO STRENGTHEN AND UPGRADE EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY, NOT ONLY TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS BUT MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, TO UPLIFT THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF FILIPINO FAMILIES.

MAY GOD CONTINUE TO GUIDE AND STRENGTHEN YOUR RESOLVE TO LEAD OUR COUNTRY TO GENUINE PROGRESS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

FR. DANNY C. MONTANA, RCJ
PRESIDENT, DACS-COCOPEA

Berroya sacked as LTO chief, will return to DOTC

By Michael Lim Ubac

BERROYA

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS fired Land Transportation Office chief Reynaldo Berroya, Malacañang said yesterday.

Named to replace Berroya was Alberto Suansing, the president of the Philippine Chamber of Scientific and Biotechnology Operations and secretary general of the Confederation of Truckers Association of the Philippines. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, however, declined to comment on the reason why Berroya was replaced.

"That's part of the usual rigodon. Look, government officials have no 'forever title to any position. At any time, especially if they are incommunicado by their superiors, they can be [replaced]," said the Palace official.

Ermita said Berroya would revert to his post of Assistant Secretary at the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC).

Ermita said the order signed on Monday was to be implemented immediately.

But he said it was up to Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza to decide when to implement the order.

Ermita denied that Berroya had a falling out with Mendoza, when asked why the former was replaced as LTO chief. "I don't think so. Why is he still in DOTC if there's a souring of relationship," said Ermita.

He said the LTO vote under DOTC, "to them must be a very good reason for it." He did not elaborate.

Both Mendoza and Berroya belong to the Philippine Military Class of 1969.

There were unconfirmed reports that Berroya would soon be promoted as DOTC undersecretary.

Malacañang has no word about another key ally of the Arroyo administration, retired Philippine National Police Chief Arturo Lomibao.

On the eve of her departure for an Asia Pacific summit in Sydney, Australia in September, President Arroyo had effected another round of changes in her official family.

She designated Berroya as DOTC assistant secretary and named Lomibao to the LTO post.

But for still unclear reasons, Lomibao was not able to assume the LTO post.

He was instead appointed head of the National Counter-Terrorism Action Group, which is under the supervision of the anti-terrorism council headed by Ermita.

A native of Pangasinan, Lomibao agreed during the last May elections to give way to Speaker Jose de Venecia in the congressional fight for the province's fourth district.

House fails to OK bicam report on aviation act

THE HOUSE OF Representatives failed to ratify last night the bicameral conference committee report on the proposed Civil Aviation Act, aimed at reforming the aviation industry amid regulating its access to the international aviation community.

Yesterday's session was abruptly adjourned following a privilege speech on the sponsorship controlling the House leadership.

The bicameral committee last Tuesday passed a reconciled version of the civil aviation bill in an urgent move to reverse the recent ratings downgrade given by the US Federal Aviation Administration on concerns about the safety of Philippine airports and air carriers.

Bataan Rep. Mario Pacunwella, chair of the House committee on transportation, said the Senate and House panels finalized the bicameral report on the last scheduled session day of the 13th Congress.

Pacunwella said the Senate expected Congress to ratify the report yesterday so that by next week there would be a new law, after it is signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"This will really be ratified because everyone knows how important this is," he said.

The proposed law addresses the concerns raised by the US Fed, whose ratings downgrade noticeably affected confidence to air travel as well as business and tourism in the country.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, who co-sponsored the bill in the Senate, said he is optimistic that with the creation of the CAAP the country will be able to recover from the downgrade of its air travel safety ratings.

The USDOA reclassified the Philippines as Category 2 in terms of aviation safety, meaning the country is non-compliant with International standards.

"One of the reasons why our safety oversee rating has been downgraded is because we lack a centralized aviation body," Angara said. Norman Bordadora and Oona Pinzdinges

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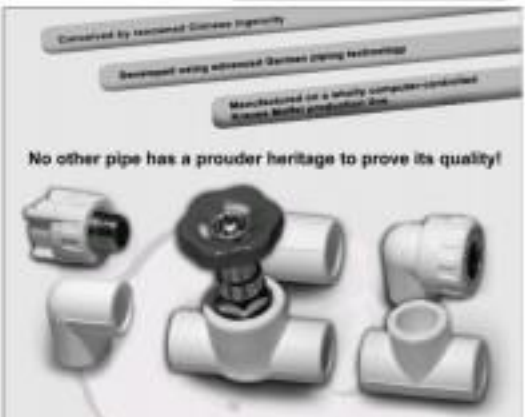

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 31, 2008
3rd Week in Ordinary Time
John Bosco

1st Reading: 2 Sm 7:18-19, 24-29
Respond: Mk 4:21-25

Jesus said to his disciples, "Does the light come in to be put under a tub or a bed? Surely it is put on a lampstand. Whatever is hidden will be disclosed, and whatever is kept secret will be brought to light. Listen then, if you have ears!"

And he also said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear. In the measure you give, so shall you receive and still more will be given to you. For to the one who produces something, more will be given, and from him who does not produce anything, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Commentary:

We have been enlightened by the wisdom of the Gospel, we have been made children of the light through Baptism. Jesus tells us the light of the world. The light that we have been given to remain in by sharing with someone like and by expressing our faith in word and deed. Sharing the light does not diminish us in any way, but instead brings abundant blessings.

We have been given so much. May we be faithful stewards of the light of Christ that has been entrusted to us, keeping the light burning brightly and allowing it to shine before all.

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INQUIRER

GMA sons spearhead move vs JDV

Front page A1

...valley in the family-owned Milory's Grill in Pasay City, at which the supposed contender for the speakership, Ilocos City Rep. Francisco Magsaysay, was present, according to an ousters in the administration coalition who asked not to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Dato Arroyo was also present, along with 20 other members of the House and two former congressmen, said the source, who also alleged that money changed hands and promises were made at the meeting.

In Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday tried to downplay the President's role in the ouster move.

Asked if the gave her some assurance that she will not be the next to be axed, Ermita said he was in no position to say:

"From where I sit and from what I know, I don't think there was any such guidance. Try to imagine, how would the President give us the instruction in the first place? Remember, this talk about leadership change [in the House]—unless the President also knows, and may have somehow spoken with Congressman Milory?

"I'm not sure that for sure she has talked to her mind. But I'm very sure Congressman Milory, being a responsible politician, would understand the pronouncements of the President, who is the chief [of the ruling Lakas-CMD]."

Milory Arroyo himself told the Inquirer that his mother should not intervene in the House's internal affairs.

"[She] should let the elected operate and do their duties," Milory's ambush Palace statement...

The Palace should respect the difference of the executive and legislative branches.

"That's me talking as a congressman."

Clamor for change

Guido in the House leadership behind De Venecia became apparent yesterday after two committee chairs—Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra of agriculture and Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez of oversight—cited a purported clamor for change and openly sought his ouster.

A third committee chair—Bukidnon Rep. Monico Puentevella of transportation—said the Speaker should resign but one of his nominees, Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, from rethinking Mr Arroyo and her husband if he did not want a serious challenge to his leadership.

"If he can't discipline his son, what will stop those in the House from moving against him? The Arroyos sons are in the House. Joey is an assistant," Puentevella said in a news forum in Quezon City.

Puentevella said the wounds created by Joey de Venecia's allegations against the President's husband, Mike Arroyo, in connection with the short aborted National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp. had not even healed completely. (See related story on Page A7.)

And yet, Puentevella said, Joey de Venecia was again jumping in matters on the com—a reference to his statement on Tuesday that Mike Arroyo was behind the ouster moves against the Speaker.

"Because he a fact that the First Gentleman is not involved in these ouster moves," Puentevella said. "I have heard grumbling in Lakas before, and the First Gentleman is not involved."

Puentevella also pointed that while De Venecia was claiming that he, Mr Arroyo and former President Fidel Ramos were a united front in Lakas, his camp was not saying that Mike Arroyo was plotting against the Speaker.

"The President's allies in the House are hurt, and you can't expect them to act more," Puentevella said. "I'm sure they will not just sit and watch the parade go by."

Still Lakas member

Reporters said he had information that the President's sons and brother-in-law Ilocos Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo, were backing him as replacement for De Venecia.

"I heard [they are," he said. "The Mindanao congressmen are the ones telling me that I am being supported by them. But being supported by them, that is not a statement to that effect."

Indeed, Milory Arroyo said he had yet to make up his mind on who to support in the ouster move against De Venecia. He said he was not a party to the move.

"Although I have taken a leave of absence from Lakas, I remain a member of the majority. And as a member of the majority, I will abide by the way the majority will vote on the issue," he told the Inquirer. "I will just remain as things develop."

Milory Arroyo also said his sons in no position to confirm Ermita's statement last week, and that Mr Arroyo had called from Davao—where the attended the World Economic Forum—to tell him to relay to administration congressmen that the President "is not involved."

"I'm not privy [to their conversations]," said the President's eldest child. He said he had yet to talk to his mother as well regarding the situation in the House.

Expectedly, Milory Arroyo chose to say his father is "neutral" on the move to oust De Venecia.

"First of all, my father is sick. Second, he is abroad. How can he be part of these moves?

"The thing with Joey is that he is fond of allegations ... without the benefit of the truth."

On good terms

At his regular press briefing, yesterday, Ermita said the NBN-ZTE deal was being used by "some people to unnecessarily fan whatever differences the President and the Speaker [may have] on that issue."

"We got word that even the son of the Speaker, Joey de Venecia, had already spoken against [Chair Representative] Teves [who is also supposedly the one], Ermita said.

With this, he said, the President and the Speaker, Lakas chair and president, respectively, were on good terms.

It remains to be seen if the Speaker who already demands people from using the NBN-ZTE issue to "destabilize [her] position."

"If I were he, I will stop talking about it and, for that matter, continue to influence people that he can influence, especially his own congressmen," Ermita said, adding:

"To pronounce harmony it's about time everybody stopped talking about anything that will alienate one from the other in the spirit of true reconciliation, in the spirit of forgiveness in the leadership of Lakas-CMD."

Ermita said he expected the Lakas national directorate assembly on Feb. 7 to be a venue for party matters to "iron out differences" because "we want some harmony in the political environment."

According to Ermita, those pleading in recent protests from De Venecia do not have the numbers because until now they have not stood in plenary session to declare all seats vacant.

"I guess they really have no chance of succeeding," he said.

A good year

But Suarez said the group of congressmen that supported Cebu Rep. Eddie Gullas in his fight for the speakership against De Venecia in August 2007 had decided that they never going to move to oust the latter.

"We expect 2008 to be a good year. We are 81 percent optimistic that it will be a good year to achieve that, you need a good relationship with the President. Now, if that relationship is strained, there should be a change in the leadership," Suarez added in the business.

He said he was proposing a numbers wherein those who wanted the Speaker removed would come up with a manifestation signed by 193 members asking him to step down.

"If we muster enough numbers, he should give up his seat," Suarez said.

In a statement, Suarez ascribed De Venecia for purportedly taking his sons as "a tool to pressure" Ms Arroyo to back his speakership.

"What kind of ally can you call someone like Jose de Venecia, who lets his lone his sons use him as a tool to pressure the President when it suits his needs and purposes?" Suarez said...adding:

Story de Venecia can just agree some falsehoods, double-bruises and triple-bruises to malign the First Family anytime he wants it, as long as his friends in the media continue to use him as a tool in ...

Speaker's allies avoid confrontation

By Norman Bordadora

ALLIES OF SPEAKER JOSE de Venecia yesterday appeared to back down from a confrontation on the House floor than would have made close who are for or against him.

Despite an attendance of 199 lawmakers, the House adjourned after only one privilege speech—delivered by a De Venecia ally who called on his colleagues "not to touch his boss."

"They came in aggressive and they screamed," Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis said of minority Rep. Bienvenido Abante's participation speech calling on lawmakers to stop the intrigue on the House leadership and the adjournment that followed.

Abante called for solidarity and for the House members to attend to legislative work for the people's benefit.

Many stood to lampoon him. Abante, but he declined. The session was briefly suspended, and upon its resumption, Iloilo Rep. Janet Garin moved to adjourn.

Before anyone could object to Garin's motion, Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar declared the session adjourned.

"They were afraid to talk about the speakership. They were afraid that someone would move [for the Veneciia] to remove [his son]," said Solis, an avowed opponent of the Speaker.

But Abante told reporters after the adjournment: "If they want to strike up the band, go with it. Bring it to the floor next week.

"That's another night to be prepared. We should bring it here instead of in secret meetings."

In aid of speakership

A minority member, Cebu Rep. Jose Villarosa Jr., called it "an ad jose session in aid of the speakership."

But Cortes said it was mere speculation that someone would move for a leadership change yesterday.

"There is no move; basically nothing is abuzz," she said in explaining why she moved to adjourn so early.

A roundup of the early adjournment was the Civil Aeronautics Act, the bilateral report of which was passed on Tuesday night.

The proposed law is urgent as it is meant to address the US Federal Aviation Administration's downgrade of the international safety rating of the Philippine aviation industry.

Senior Asst. Majority Floor Leader and chair of the House committee on transportation and author of the bill, said he was in favor have ratified yesterday.

McCain wins Florida; Giuliani set to withdraw

Front page A1

"We have a ways to go, but we're getting closer" to the nomination, the 71-year-old McCain said to an appearance before cheering supporters.

Rudy Giuliani, the former New York mayor, was third. It was the best showing of the campaign, but not nearly good enough for the one-time frontrunner who declined to make his last stand in a state that is home to tens of thousands of transplanted New Yorkers.

Republican officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, predicted that Giuliani would endorse McCain on Wednesday in California.

Romney, who has spent millions of dollars of his personal fortune to run for the White House, vowed to stay in the race.

The Republican candidates ran all headed to California for a debate on Wednesday night at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley.

Clinton victory

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton won the Democratic primary, an event that drew no campaigning by any of the contenders, as voters headed to the polls to the winner because of a dispute between the state and national parties over the date of the primary.

Clinton and her chief rival, Barack Obama, were moving quickly on Wednesday to shore up backing in states with bigger prizes to come next week in the potential for a protracted competition for the party's nomination grow ever more likely, making for a bitter battle over delegates to the summer's national nominating convention.

The Florida victory was worth 57 Republican National Convention delegates for McCain, a winner take-all haul that catapulted him ahead of Romney for the overall delegate lead.

Returns from 99 percent of Florida's precincts showed McCain with 36 percent of the vote and Romney with 31 percent. Giuliani trailed with 15 percent.

'I can unite party'

"It shows one thing. I'm the conservative leader who can unite the party," McCain said to a brief interview with The Associated Press. The veteran Arizona senator and former Vietnam prisoner of war has long been considered too much of a maverick by many of the Republican party's core conservative base.

In remarks to supporters in Orlando, Giuliani referred to his candidacy repeatedly in the past tense—as though it were over. Giuliani had staked his White House bid on the Florida primary, ceding earlier contests to the other candidates.

The proud New Yorker chose to stay positive and to run a campaign of ideas to an era of personal attacks, negative ads and cynical spin," he said. "You don't always win, but you can always try to do it right, and you did."

Asked directly if he was dropping out of the race, Giuliani said, "I'm going to California."

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, the Baptist preacher-turned-politician, told supporters he would campaign on despite finishing fourth with 13 percent. Texas Rep. Ron Paul was fifth, with 3 percent.

Race goes national

Florida marked the end of one phase of the campaign, the last in a series of major single-state contests that witnessed a race unlike nearly field.

The next party national test week—Feb.5 also will be the day dozens ...

The race was long, however, gradually became less of a concern among Republicans. George W. Bush's decision to increase troop deployments began to produce results. McCain also sought to reinflate his position on immigration.

By the time of the New Hampshire primary, McCain had wrestled his candidacy and ...

In the overall delegate race, it was McCain, 93; Romney 59; Mike Huckabee, 40; Ron Paul, 4; and Giuliano one.

Remarkable comeback

McCain's victory in Florida was another step in one of the most remarkable political comebacks of recent times.

McCain entered the race the least-known, then found his campaign out of funds and ...

He was forced to fire his campaign staff and ...

Army works as security agency to mining firm

Front page A1

...ices, installations, personnel, equipment and properties of the company," the MOA said.

They can be deputized in "times other places that may be agreed upon by both parties" to act as "theft, pilferage, robbery, arson and other unlawful acts by employees and other intruders."

AFP directive

Gomez found no violation with the Army's provision of security services to private companies.

"This joint undertaking is allowed by a directive of the [Armed Forces of the Philippines]," he said. He did not say which letter of instruction governed such schemes.

Gomez said though that the troop was called by because the mining site was located in an area "subject to a 'nonfeasible' condition" by the communist New People's Army (NPA), he said. The NPA has remained in the United States' list of terrorist groups.

The arrangement, according to the DMGS, follows the May 20, 2003, revised guidelines on the AFP.

BMGMC agreed to place its civilian security force under the Army's operational supervision.

In case of "imminent or actual attacks on the company and nearby business projects by communist rebels and other dissident groups," the Army has the "authority to muster other AFP assets in operational concert, the civilian security agency said, adding:

"The Philippine Army may provide security assistance to the company in the form of augmentation force."

Cabinet nickel

The work of DMGMC and PD-Agbara is limited to CRRU's MPSA for five million tons of nickel ore in five years from 3,796 hectares, said Ed Lonzanida, PD-Agbara vice president for corporate affairs.

Cabinet said the SGAA and the Army were distinct. "We are covered by the SGAA, not the Army. The SGAA is our people," he said.

Although that was the case, he admitted that the Army would be providing training, firearms and bullets to the SGAA. Gomez confirmed this.

According to Cabinet, it was "imperative" to maintain investor confidence. BMGMC spends P1.2 million monthly for their security services.

The Army has also deployed two teams from the 24th IB to secure a bridge connecting Barangays Lumapon and Tesoro, outside the mining area. Following reports that the NPA would blow them up, the bridge is the main route of equipment had happened in the last seven months, though.

Cabinet said DMCI buildings Inc. (DMCI) had also employed the SGAA in its forestry plantations in Mindanao and its Semirara mining area in Antique. "The use of [the] AFP depends on the necessity of the area," he said.

A member of the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) said small miners, rather than rebels, were what the SGAA members were after.

Security vs police forces

The SGAA has also been used against police forces mobilized by AD-ISA Mining Corp., with which DMGMC is in conflict over a pier area, according to Zambales Gov. Amor Deloso. "They almost shot each other," Deloso said. The incident five months ago set off the share of Deloso.

Cabinet confirmed sending an SGAA team to enforce ...

Documents ...

Gomez said DMGMC got a three-day temporary restraining order against AD-ISA's port area. The order lapsed on Jan. 29, but DMGMC got another TRO for 17 days.

Aside from what is now known as Zambales as a "port battle," DMGMC's conflict with its partners, and AD-ISA are locked in an ore war that to solved the use of the SGAA.

Shipment to China

Zambales Chromite Mining Co. Inc. (ZCMC) has asked the Philippine Peza Authority on Jan. 23 to stop AD-ISA from shipping out 60 tons of "disputed" ore to China on the Bulkey vessel.

According to Consul, DMCI is an investor in 70 Asia Holdings that bought some shares in ZCMC. The latter is the holder of a MPSA for 3,663 hectares. It alleged that AD-ISA took ore from the MPSA covered western area.

Section 61 of the PMRB said the new conflicts arose from longstanding disputes in the mining boom years of Zambales.

100 prov'l journalists join class suit vs gov't

By Marlon Ramos

MISSING PROVINCE (DOST) REporters are more prone to harassment and threats, at least 100 journalists from six provinces have added their names as petitioners in the P10-million class suit filed by the media against top government officials.

The new signatories are mostly members of the provincial chapters of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), the biggest such alliance in the country.

NUJP secretary general Inocencio Pasion yesterday said more than the names from Metro Manila and other provinces were expected to sign on as petitioners.

The NUJP will submit an amended motion to the 14-page petition that is filed with the Makati City Regional Trial Court (RTC) at exactly 10 a.m. on the 100th day of the petition's date, in provincial chapters, Pasion told the Inquirer.

"The overwhelming support of our colleagues from all over the country is proof that journalists are not just seeking publicity for themselves [by filing the petition]," she said, adding:

"There are clear threats to press freedom and the right of the people to information. Journalists will not rest in their monumental while unscrupulous government officials example on our basic civil liberties."

Timely act

The new petitioners are members of the NUJP in Batangas, Quezon, Camarines, Davao Occidental, Surigao and Cotabato.

Jerwell Ozaeta, chair of NUJP-Batangas, said the filing of the class suit was a timely act because journalists continued to be subjected to intimidation and other threats.

He said provincial journalists were more prone to pressure and threats from the authorities.

"Earlier, most of the more than 80 journalists murdered since 1986 were based in the provinces," Ozaeta said on the phone.

He added: "I think it's high time we set aside our petty differences and shamed the authorities that we are united in the fight for our civil rights."

Arrests and warnings

"But we should also condemned that this is not just an issue of the freedom of the media. We are also defending the people's right to know."

The class suit filed on Monday accused those in the arrest of some 60 journalists who covered the standoff between government troops and Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV (L-4) at the Peninsula Manila on Nov 29, 2007, and the subsequent government administration warning reporters of criminal liability if they disobey orders from authorities.

Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Winlove Reyes immediately granted the journalists' appeal for a 72-hour temporary restraining order to stop police and other government officials from dispersing the media.

Those named respondents in the case were Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon Jr., Director Gavin Barlaz of the National Capital Region Police Office, Chief Supt. Leonardo Laurente and Satrapa of the PNP Special Action Force, and Senior Supt. Aileen Tedlosa of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

PLDT man surfaces but ...

From page A1

According to Pinlac, he works as a bookkeeper at the PLDT accounting department. On that day, he said, he and other PLDT employees were in the same area in Makati City holding a protest action against labor-contract malfunctions.

"We decided to continue our protest action at the hotel because the media were there and are assured to dramatize our protest. We wanted to take advantage of the situation. But I never set foot inside the hotel," he said via the phone, adding that the Marines had blocked him and the other protesters.

Repairman's uniform

Pinlac said he was wearing "the old uniform of repairmen who go to customers' homes to do repair work."

"But we don't see that anymore because contract malfunction has ruined [the reputation] of," he said.

He recalled making a speech listing the controversies haunting the Arroyo administration. "I said something like our workers as electrical burning to make a choice between rights and wrong. But I wasn't exciting, and that wasn't inciting to violence."

Pinlac also denied having helped renegade Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon escape from the hotel.

"That's really not in the picture. But to say I helped Faeldon is absurd and outrageous," he said.

Pinlac professed admiration for Trillanes and Lim. "Maybe if we knew what was really going on inside the hotel, if we understood the issues involved and we agreed with them, we might have joined them," he said.

The other day Gonzalez requested the Philippine National Police to identify Dr. man caught on video by ABS-CBN network "speaking against the government."

It was not the first time his authorities to allege that civilians had helped Faeldon escape.

Earlier, sources in the PNP said a female wife service reporter had assisted Faeldon by giving him a press ID card. But the woman was never officially named or charged.

Middle-aged? Welcome to ...

From page A1

people from 80 countries.

The researchers found that the probability of happiness for British men and women peaked at around 44 years of age, according to a University of Warwick press release.

In the United States, though, the researchers found that among women, unhappiness peaked at around the age of 40, before increasing again to a median 50.

Even so, the researchers found that the U-shape of happiness was constant around the world and that midlife depression occurred regardless of marital status, changes in job or income or offspring.

The study appears in found Science & Medicine, published by the Dutch publishing house Elsevier.

"Some people suffer more than others, but in our data the average effect is large," said coauthor Andrew Oswald.

"It happens to men and women, in single and married people, to rich and poor, and in those with and without children. Nobody knows why we see this consistency."

The dip in mental health comes on slowly rather than a big slide in a single year.

"Only to clock 50s do most people emerge from the low period. But encouragingly, by the time you are 70, if you are physically fit then you emerge even on happy and mentally healthy as a 20 year-old," said Oswald.

The hope emerging that such feelings are completely normal in midlife might even help individuals survive this phase better."

Moderately happy people

Still, another study showed that being moderately happy may be more desirable than being extremely happy.

According to a US team of researchers who looked into happiness for more than two decades, moderately happy people are wealthier—and maybe healthier—than extremely happy individuals.

While people who are happy are certainly more healthy and successful than those who are angry and depressed, Dr. Ed Diener of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign told Science Health that moderately happy people may achieve more than those who are extremely happy. They might also live longer.

"Our findings suggest that extremely high levels of happiness might not be a desirable goal and that there is more to psychological well-being than high levels of happiness," Diener and his team report in the journal Perspectives on Psychological Science.

The researchers looked at six different studies of happiness and life outcomes to investigate the optimum level of happiness.

One study, the World Values survey, which included nearly 150,000 people from 90 countries, found that those who were moderately happy—they rated their life satisfaction at 6 or 7 out of 10—made more money than those who rated their satisfaction at 9 or 10 were more likely to have stable intimate relationships.

Another study found that the happier college students were also the most social, but they had lower grade-point averages than their slightly less happy peers.

Lower incomes

In four studies that looked at the well-being of people several years after their happiness level was initially assessed, the happiest people wound up with less education and lower incomes than the moderately happy individuals.

While the seventh study didn't look at happiness and health, Diener noted that other research has shown that the happiest people may not live as long as moderately happy individuals.

Extremely happy people may be less likely to follow up on healthy concerns, Diener suggested.

It's also possible that being is so "stressed," extremely happy ones can take a toll on one's cardiovascular system, he said.

People for whom extreme happiness is a goal may also be dyed-seeking risk-takers.

As for achievement goes, Diener said extremely happy people may be more satisfied with their lot in life and less likely to make efforts in change it by getting more education or finding a new job.

"Maybe we're not built to be ecstatic all the time, maybe we need some negative emotions," he said.

But who isn't to say that it's a good thing to be unhappy.

"If you're a 6, you probably ought to get help," Diener suggested. "If you're an 8 ... maybe that's good enough, you don't need to take Prozac." —Reports from AFP and Reuters

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Bang bang, you're dead

THE BRAZENNESS OF THE KILLING TAKES THE breath away. According to eyewitnesses, a man wearing a shirt with "Police" emblazoned on the back walked up to former Mayor Fey Yap as he was waiting in a corridor of the Manila City Hall and shot him five times. Two others were wounded in the shooting, before the lone gunman escaped.

EDITORIAL

The ex-mayor, whose previous conviction on murder charges was reversed on appeal, was awaiting the start of another trial for murder, the latest turn in a political career marked by extreme violence. It is possible that the spiral of vengeance led directly to his death.

That is for the police to sort out, but the fact that the killing took place right outside Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 19 is for the police to account for.

It stands to reason that violence may erupt in courtrooms adjudicating difficult, violent cases. In the cramped conditions of most of our courtrooms, victims and alleged victimizers may find themselves in unbearable proximity. It is only logical that courtrooms provide for certain contingencies, such as a fist fight or a shooting match breaking out.

The unusual circumstances of Yap, however, positively called for higher security measures. According to Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, "[Yap] was also ambushed inside City Hall [previously] but managed to survive." In other words, an attempt on his life while in official custody had already been made; it is only logical to assume that more attempts would be tried.

And yet the gunman was able to make his way up to the fourth floor corridor, to loop his executioner's apparatus...

Manila's chief of police, Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, said the police would investigate possible security lapses. "There are police assigned in courts but these are roving policemen," he said. "We'll try to find out how the gunman managed to smuggle a gun and if he was indeed wearing a police shirt as claimed by some witnesses. We're trying to determine where the laxity happened and who could be held responsible."

We suggest the police start with the guards assigned to Yap, who must have been aware that this particular wife-facing murder charges was a murder target too. But the police cannot stop there; they must investigate their own handling of security in Manila's City Hall and, especially, in Manila's courtrooms.

It is precisely the role of the courts to make violence irrelevant; for most people who find themselves caught up in the sometimes bewildering judicial process, the courts are essentially dispute-resolution institutions. They are a means for society to resolve arguments or to achieve a working sense of fairness without resorting to violence.

For this to work, the courts must be able to provide anyone with a grievance, or anyone called upon to defend's one's self, with a minimum level of confidence in the system. Part of this level of confidence involves personal security. A rape victim must be able to confront her rapist without fear of reprisal; an accused must be able to defend one's honor without fear of physical assault.

The assassination of an accused murderer right outside the court where he would have been tried for murder is not a vigilante's dream; it is a law-abiding citizen's nightmare. The killing undermines the level of confidence that allows the courts to settle disputes peacefully in the first place.

We can easily read more sinister implications to the fatal lapse of security; in the last seven years, the judiciary has often proven to be the unswallowable stone that sticks in the craw of the Arroyo administration. Yet another murder in or just outside the courtrooms could be an omen of worse things to come.

But even without reading politics into Tuesday's brazen killing, we cannot be blind to its consequences for democracy as a whole. For the rule of law to work, those who rely on it must not be thrown in harm's way.

The judiciary, with the active help of the national police, must take the needed steps to improve security: limit the number of entry and exit points, install metal detectors, reimburse closely with jail guards, implement an alert system that recognizes high-risk detainees, transfer VIP security details to vulnerable courts, and so on.

But first the police in Manila must account for Tuesday's fatal lapse.

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Thinking different instead of small

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"WHERE THERE'S NO HEAD, ALL IS MISSED." The smart sophist stuck of the future exchange between 140-plus lawyers who claim that 30 law-cities "rob their welfare," otherwise known as Internal Revenue Allotments (IRA).

IRAs are local governments' shares in taxes collected. Since 1991, the Local Government Code banned taxpayer cities and provinces through mandatory IRA transfers. Between 1991 and 1994, IRAs per person in the provinces almost tripled," a Philippine Human Development Report noted. "The local share of public spending nearly doubled: from 7 percent to 13.4 percent."

Rust and now services plus infrastructure have become the unrelated but economic growth. "Throw those dimes," Mencken say. Money begets money.

In 1998, IRAs reached 180 billion. Today they're close to P327 billion for provinces and cities, says the Commission on Audit. If the IRA share of 41,379 barangays are tallied, the total adds up to P386 billion, the COA's Annual Financial Report on LGUs reveals. Today 67 cents on every peso collected by post-voters from IRAs. It was only 68 centavos a decade back.

Brgy. repaired decrepit town halls, finished health centers, bought police equipment, etc. They spurred growth ...not enough to root out insurmountable poverty, but adequate to unleash cutting expectations. Here's what wouldn't be higher than if fiscally repressed," say the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Often, wages of temporary workers are charged against development projects. In contrast, private industry lives those who spend three bucks on wages to deliver a peso-in-market-buy power to purchasers.

Why keep poverty-stripped provinces afloat on one end. Iloilo earns only P13.4 million a year. On the other end is foreign debt-strapped Cebu City. It pays P3 million a day for its yen loans. Iloilo shares up services distributed by debt servicing.

Thus, Cebu Mayor Tomas Osmeña is among the most vocal critics of 16 towns, which wrestled through the bush door into the realm of cities. The 16 got Congress to exempt them from meeting minimum income and population criteria, so they could paint "city" on their town halls.

That allowed them to dip into the common IRA pool...by siphoning from others. A by-product is not civic-inspired. In 1995, there were 61 cities. Today, we have 136 cities. Bogus (Secession) Law No. 11. And in the wings is House Bill 39 which seeks to create 27 more.

The income pressure were inevitable. Today's IRA, for example, will be pruned by P42 million. Tacloban's will be clipped by P32 million. Bacolod's by P41 million. But it is Puerto Princesa that will need much help: cut to P7.47 million.

Nothing is more divisive than money. They say, quoting singers, "Pera may nagpapasaya." the old Filipino axiom says. You can make the on dance where you have money.

By stubbornly ignoring criteria it set for cities, Congress invited this contemporary dispute. Now it will play out to anchor.

One of the victims is the uphill effort, by scholars and financial agencies, to reform the IRA system. Those grants were cobbled to give LGUs elbow room to reinforce their local tax base by reasonable property. In Pampanga, for example, Gov. Eduardo Nachilo has more than quintupled land property tax collections—only to be derailed by traditional politicians.

IRAs were never meant to substitute for local income, a United Nations study notes. Thus, the ideal sharing ratio should be 50-50—funds raise half the revenues and national governments the other half. Instead, the LGUs should subside that down to 10 percent, the study adds.

Precisely the opposite is happening today. Why? Because our politicians, as Oscar Wilde said, "can resist everything but temptation."

IRAs are unconditional grants. They don't reset performance. They're, in effect, "blank checks." Our politicians can stuff such "temptations" nudes away. Thus, many rigged IRAs into mini-pork barrels. Performance criteria must be imbibed in.

We proceed in more than just about driving IRAs. That's thinking small. "the future requires we think different.

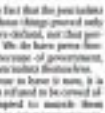
In this new century, threatened to jettison the dominant 19th-century model, the World Bank points out in its study "Making Cities Livable." Under this obsolete model, city halls lavished most resources and infrastructure, the patron most of our 136 city masters still work by. Over abolished by babies, migrants and poverty, this model fails to save poverty, curb crime, ensure clean water, close housing gaps. Officials "raise [collection of] part of scale) and, at best, haphazardly neglect the poorer sector. These make this mess deeper."

In the future, the cities that will succeed are those that cut back their role "as primary providers." Instead, they become "enablers"—keeping out "the private sector, nongovernment bodies, to deliver basic services. This is the "quiet revolution in local governance" the world over, the bank says. And there are enough success stories to prod city officials to rethink old ways.

Can our politicians now stop, cold turkey, their addiction to IRA dales? Or is that a no-brainer?

(E-mail: jmercado@mail.com)

Freedom 101



THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

JOSE ORDINO JR. AND MARIA ROSSA HAD some very interesting things to say at the press conference after the filing of the media man against Ishmael Ermita et al. last Monday.

Rossa's are easy to make, said Ordino, because you don't really have to specify the action for them. Their vagueness is their power. "When the government makes threats, it is a convenient problematic because it has the executive power to back up those threats," he said. Ishmael, those threats supplant due process and dictate the course of things.

The threats issued routinely by Eduardo Ermita, Raul Gonzalez, Rodolfo Pano, Hermogenes Esperon, Avelino Razon and several others officials ...are those of mayhem to befall so persons who "get in the way"—prevent potential from doing their job, which prevents the public in turn from knowing what's going on. In the end, Ordino says, the suits against these public officials are not just meant to defend the freedom of the press, they are meant to defend the freedom of the people.

Describing on a similar note, Rossa noted that her organization would have let powers mend's threats, and actions, slide by, but that would have brought with it disastrous consequences. "We knew that if we do nothing, we help destroy press freedom." Since Proclamation 1017, she said, the government has tried to intimidate media while another is months's path. Press freedom, she said, is only as good as journalists are willing to fight for it.

I've harped on the same themes myself over the past few years, and I'm very glad to see some fundamental truths about them reaffirmed, or indeed cast more forcefully, in these terms.

It's true, the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, as abolitionist Wendell Phillips said way back in the 19th century and press freedom is only as good as journalists are willing to fight for it. It's remarked that in one of our discussions on the class suit filed by journalists against Mike Arroyo, lawyer Harry Roque wondered if the task of having the journalists themselves involving before the court about the chilling effects of Arroyo's own libel suit against them wasn't counterproductive. Surely Arroyo's lawyers could argue that the fact that the journalists could go out and say those things was proof his libel suit did not have sufficiently chilled them?

So no, I argued. The fact that the journalists could go out and say those things proved only that the journalists were defiant, not that government was restrained. The fact that they were defiant, for that is not because of government, that is because of the principled themselves.

Indeed, if we continue in here is now, it is only because the media refused to be cowed after government attempted to muzzle them after 1017, threatening to arrest transgressors. The decision immediately condemned the threat in an editorial next day as well indeed as several journalists in a media forum in ABS-CBN that same night. I have little doubt that if those transgressions had not been taken, or taken belatedly, government would have triumphed all over press freedom more relentlessly than a herd of stampeding cattle.

Press freedom is only as good as journalists are willing to fight for it. And they have. They are. Every time GMA tells the world in her expenses abroad that her country has one of the freest presses in the world, you want to say "That is no thanks to you."

Today as the class suits show, the journalists aren't just defending press freedom, they are fighting basic. Lois Teodoro and several other media officers emphasized the importance of the class suits, not as unprecedented suits, by saying that the world is watching, what happens in this case "will become a model for other countries and journalists in the same situation." But I myself see it as having the more relevance to impart not just to the world but to this country itself. Not just to other journalists but to Filipinos as a whole.

Press freedom, it only as good as journalists are willing to fight for it. In the same token, all democratic freedoms are only as good as the people are willing to fight for them. That is true even under normal circumstances. The strength of the Western democracies does not lie in their having a strong government—as Iraqis, for fact, is strong republic—it lies in their having a strong people. It lies in people willing to defend their rights, or more graphically in New Yorkers belligerently refusing to take it"[from any body, touch me not (which is what "noli me tangere" means, though Tagalogs don't even realize) kind that allows liberty to push out like a flower from under the rubble.

What is true in normal circumstances is true in tyrannical times. That is where Dolores and Rossa's points resonate loudly. In tyrannical times, doing nothing in the face of oppression is to feed the monster. It is helping to murder yourself. It is participating in your own homicide.

You do not challenge the threats from government, as Ordino warns, those threats become policy by default or fait accompli and do not challenge the things. This is not a case of "sticks and bones may break my bones but words won't." This is a case where words become sticks and stones and break bones, the bones breaking others taking on the most feared aspects.

We do not have to go very far to see that. We certainly have someone occupying Malacañang on the strength of words, or those words in particular: "lapse in judgment." Perseus challenged them, and they lowered the way of things. To paraphrase the Bible, the word was made flesh, and the flesh rule right.

"He [pun-nalino] knows that if we do nothing, we destroy press freedom." Others will the rest of us know that if we do nothing, we destroy our freedom!

Crazy to junk JDV and his international network

IF THE RECENT CLOSE OF THE 50TH PLENARY assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines is any indication, Cardinal-elect Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales will continue to be the one Commission on Elections Chair Jose Melo refers to as a "thorn" in the Comelec supra since, presumably by navigating a new investigation. They said it was time to look the "upcoming elections" in the face and to "discern the role of the laity" in the run-up to the election. But those initially against Presidential Spokesperson Jesus Dureza's visit Dr. Jacinto Manahan Ibarra, an appointed visit Dr. Jacinto Manahan Ibarra, an appointed visit Dr. Jacinto Manahan Ibarra, an appointed

A 'green' prayer for our bishops

LETTERS

WORLD GREETINGS OF ENDEMIC PEACE! We had hoped that our Catholic bishops would wisely and consider the implications and priority of our environment to their mission and beyond. Still we pray:

Almighty God, we the humble stewards of Your creation seek Your divine guidance and help for the mental perspicuity and conservation of our country's environment and natural resources.

Send us the Holy Spirit that we may be blessed with spiritual wisdom in valuing great care of our natural assets which You have lovingly provided us since the beginning of time, in this beautiful, ever-evolved.

We beseech from special blessing to our righteous beloved bishops. Please touch them to give more concern over the Philippines people's just desires and urgent needs for safe food, healthy environment and a sustainable economic development.

We pray to You, Dear Father in the name of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

—EUGENIO C. GARCIA,
Sanib Lahos Kay Inang Kalikasan
(SaLiKa), Lubigan City

Michel and his remarks on biofuels

WE WAS TO PREVIDE SOME INFOR-mation regarding Prof. Hartmut Michel, Nobel laureate in Chemistry, and his recent visit to the Philippines during which he made some comments on biofuels. Michel was invited to the 10th Eurasia Conference on the Chemical Sciences, where he delivered a technical lecture on the "Determination of the Three-Dimensional Structure of a Photosynthetic Reaction Center." The 10th Eurasia conference was held at the PICC, Jan. 7-11, 2008.

Michel and three other Nobel laureates—Paulo Teob Lee, Ryoji Noyori and Aaron Ciechanover...were also invited to participate in a public forum, which we called the Nobel Forum, to discuss their views on "Science and Innovation." Michel's remarks on biofuels (Inquirer, 1/14/08) were made during the Nobel Forum.

Michel is a German national. He is a professor of biochemistry at the reknown Wolfgang Goethe University and is the director of the Department of Molecular Membrane Biology at the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical in Frankfurt and Main.

The Eurasia Conference on Chemical Sciences is an international series of chemistry conferences held in a different country every four years. It has an international Organizing Committee and an International Advisory Board which includes many internationally known scientists from prominent universities. It is a voluntary association. The 10th Eurasia Conference was organized by the Engineering Alumni in Philippine Database of Inventors and Allied Works (EDISON-CAT) and the Philippine Federation of Chemistry Societies (PFCS).

The major sponsors of the 10th Eurasia Conference were the Commission on Higher Education, the Department of Science and Technology and its agencies PCASTRD, PAST and PCHRD and Century Park Hotel.

Michel made his remarks based on his scientific assessment of plant physiology, on which biofuels are based. We hope that his remarks will contribute to a healthy and constructive debate on the place of biofuels in the overall alternative energy programs of the Philippines.

—DR. EDGARDO M. ROYO,
chair, National Chemistry Committees,
10th Eurasia Conference;
dean, School of Science and Engineering,
Ateneo de Manila University;
DR. EZRA C. LLADOS,
chair, National Advisory Board,
10th Eurasia Conference;
chair, Nobel Forum Committee,
professor, Institute of Chemistry,
UP Diliman

News reporting should not obstruct ends of justice

THIS IS IN REPLY TO JUDE PAUL MANjares' letter to criticize to Justice Raul Gonzalez's media advisory. (Inquirer, 1/15/08).

1. Manjares said: I have a duty and responsibility to report to the people the crimes which they have the right to know.

The police and the government have the right to do their job and we as a people have the right to be protected. Any suspect should be rather know than be called a tab as reported by media (And be protected from those threatening his life, etc)"

2. He said: My function, role as a journalist does not elevate justice.

Any person, whatever his function or role in society, is often using justice if he is hampering police operations. It does not matter that because one is a journalist, he is above the law.

3. He said: I do not know of any law that says "Media coverage of an impending crime is a crime."

I don't think there is such a law. In Gonzalez's advisory, he never said that media coverage is a crime. This is one example of how Utah is being twisted.

4. He said: The Constitution of the Philippines states "No laws shall be passed abridging the freedom of the press." I hope the Justice secretary has not forgotten this.

An advisory is not a law, but the advisory stated that the police will not hesitate to arrest people who are obstructing justice. There must be swift delivery of justice, to get serious, people shouldn't be made to look for the media to know the score.

4. He said: Out of respect, media do not air ongoing military/police operations for us as not to warn criminals or masterminds.

This is not true. There have been instances when media, while covering an event, did a live report on military operations. Even in the Manila Hot Zone, the media were reporting live on air the military positions and what they were doing. Didn't we see Gen. Asuncion Tolliano II watching TV live?

JOURNALIST Diana Bunag at the Senate hearing on media arrests

I think Manjares has to be reminded that press freedom is not absolute. Press freedom has limitations and it should not stop the government from delivering justice.

A has been reported, that a journalist helped Capt. Wesmer Beddot escape. Freedom comes with responsibility. In a true democratic society freedom must be exercised with responsibility and with utmost consideration for others. If media had to satisfy oneself, it becomes a crime and it is the law that is right to stop it. Freedom will never be absolute, timeless freedom breeds anarchy. I hope Manjares knows this.

—JAIRO CANETE B.
mayo99@gmail.com

Letters can effect changes

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK Cassie Louise Despabiladeras for writing about "Unsocial, thick-faced teachers," (Inquirer, 12/26/07) He had the timely piece about abusive teachers but led to a positive change in the school where I am teaching.

Just after a recent after-class faculty meeting we about to exit, the school principal John summoned those meetings and an-campus reviews) by reading biblical and literary passages) read about Despabiladeras' letter. After which, she told us that she had a meeting she needs before with a parent who was "emotional" by his/her concern to tell her (the principal) about a very disturbing "discovery."

According to our principal, the parent, whose name was not revealed, said that she found a chicken-for-a-beheading, bandage papers in her child's desk. When asked about the others, the child said that she, like some of her classmates, bought them from one of the vendors whose son/daughter was a candidate in that position.

I was shocked to hear this. I had no idea that the vendors involved, who was also pro-

vide at class meeting, said that we must pass to our seats the other faculty members, but also to some of her students.

I will not belabor here the ensuing detailed of that meeting, but I be perceived as moving in origins. All I will say is that our principal, using carefully chosen words, firmly but diplomatically dealt with the situation there and there, without alienating the teacher or him.

All's well that ends well. But I hope that the principal's reminder to us still always remain in everyone's memory. "We teachers should keep dignity and self-respect and should not take advantage of our position." I'm happy the practice has stopped.

I would also like to thank the Inquirer for continuously publishing letters about the Filipino people's miracle and selfless—from passion towers, tutoring pipes, cupcakes installations, outings guesthouse officials, to personnel at distance, etc, etc., etc. I hope that more others, from the four corners, have also been inspired by letters published in the Inquirer to speak up against what's wrong in our society.

—ESTHER BEVON FERRARIS
esther.ferraris@yahoo.com

Yes, dogs can evolve into cats

THIS IS IN REACTION TO Joel Bernardo's comment on Michael Tan's column "God and science." (Inquirer, 1/21/08).

As long as people relish to cite and cling to their coded ideas of "creationism," evolution will never be understood for what it is. Human life is far too short for one short (for-an-even-human history) to be run a witness of major evolutionary changes. The so-called "missing link" is a "red herring" propagated by anti-evolutionists. Our biochemical links to all kinds of creatures are all over the place.

Our continual war on viruses and bacteria is the result of it

much-desired form of evolution in simpler creatures. Remember's anecdote "One dogs will never be cats" tells us that he does not understand the concept of time involved in major evolutionary changes. Yes, dogs can become cats, given the time (and I am asking here of millions of years) and the natural selection of the environment. Intelligent design is an oxymoron.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone number. Please send e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Light in the midst of gloom

I APPRECIATED CYNTHIA Balance's article titled "Cancer patients look beautiful in terms of time." (Inquirer, 1/25/08). It was a flash of light amid the circulation gloomy headlines on the front pages of newspapers. Kudos to the writer!

The Ingenious Make Me Up seminar and search for Miss Cancer Beauties coming held on St. Luke's Medical Center proved that our little efforts, time, affection and attention can help those with cancer find joy in the midst of their pain. It was uplifting to read about the courage and optimism of the beauty contestants, most of whom had just finished a round of chemotherapy.

The stories came from our caregiver Dr. Charles Charles Prado-Gonzaga who, she said, "To me, it's hitch from before woman," a timely reminder that life is a gift, and that we are all in God's loving hands.

—FERNANDO C. OLIVARES,
Montalupa City 1780

How can we protect them?
– Jaime Cardinal Sin
Dare to ask.
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

ESPINOSA gestures during a speech before soldiers and officers.

5 soldiers dead in clash with rebs

GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS CLASHED WITH communist guerrillas in Davao Oriental, leaving five soldiers dead and six wounded after the military announced it would step up attacks to finish off the rebels, officials said yesterday.

The fighting took place in the town of Baganga, Davao Oriental about 916 km southeast of Manila.

"We are still not sure if it was an ambush or encounter," said Col. Benito de Leon, spokesman for the 10th Infantry Division.

The rebels have launched attacks on military and police outposts in the area in the past.

President Macapagal-Arroyo last year ordered the military to crush the 40-year-old Maoist insurgency by 2010, and earlier this week extended the removal the chief of staff before another three months because of ongoing operations against the rebel Army People's Army.

Army officials said earlier that the guerrillas last about 3,400 fighters in battles and skirmishes last year, bringing them to about 5,700—their weakest level in 20 years.

NPA denial

In e-mailed statements, the rebels have denied battlefield losses reported by the military and claimed several tactical gains against soldiers and police.

The military said soldiers belonging to the Scout Company of the Philippine Army's 67th Infantry Battalion encountered some 70 communist guerrillas in Sitio San Francisco, Barangay Kamporesto in Baganga town.

The clash came days after Esperon said his extended term could be bloody.

Recovering Risk from the op, position and various sectors, Esperon toned down his stance, most by saying that the AFP is also addressing humanitarian concerns in the course of its war on the guerrillas.

Rigodon

Ms Arroyo extended Esperon's year of duty for another three months, saying she need to "sustain the momentum" against the NPA.

Esperon was set to step down on Feb. 9 when he turns 56, the mandatory age for retirement in the military.

He will be succeeded by incumbent Army chief, Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, on May 9.

Esperon said the military aims to dismantle 37 guerrilla fronts that are already in the "advanced stages of degradation" in the first quarter of the year.

Sir Leon, on a text message sent to the reporter, said the soldiers were not pursued when the clash occurred.

He said six other soldiers were wounded while the rebels might also have suffered an undetermined number of casualties.

Most soldiers were already sent to the area to pursue the rebels, he said.

This was the second clash in the province, which hosts a number of mining companies, this month.

Last week, a soldier was also killed when rebels attacked a detachment in Boston town, also in Davao Oriental.

Anti-Esperon

Leftist groups protested the extension of Esperon's tour of duty, asking the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to take a stand on it.

Fernando Hicap, national chair of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalayan ng Pilipinas, said Esperon's declaration of an all-out war is against the CBCP position calling on government and guerrillas to resume peace talks.

"While the Church is asking for peace, Ms. Esperon and Malacañang are talking of a renewed bloodbath," Hicap said in a statement Monday. Aviation Lts. Isagani Millanar and Nilo Bituin are Malacañang aides. Report from Duffie T. Idolor Jr. in Quirante Southern Luzon and AP

AFP chief says war on Reds 'wholistic'

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Armed Forces Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon is checking military camps for implementation of a counter-insurgency plan that seeks to address communist guerrillas by 2010.

Esperon, who was here Tuesday afternoon, said he was meeting with generals and officers to be updated of how the plans are being implemented.

He said the war, unlike what his critics said, won't be all bloodshed but "wholistic."

He refused to call it all-out war.

"The term all-out war may imply that it will be bloody or violent or will involve evacuations. What we want to call this is a wholistic approach, a wholistic war because it involves not only counter-intelligence, and civil-military operations but also political, economic and social efforts and activities not only of the AFP but also the whole government," he said.

Esperon said the counter-insurgency operations focuses on development, not combat alone.

He said the government has banned the National Development Support Command that was sent to humanitarian missions in mid-areas.

"So what we are doing is not only combat or encounters. In fact we give more time to development aspects," he said.

Esperon exhorted soldiers to support his counter-insurgency program which he said was lifted from the drawing a consensus workforce with President Macapagal-Arroyo early this month.

"Our program is to defuse the (NPA) until 2010. I hope I can convince you that it (task) is not so difficult, and with the help of our dismissal 14th Infantry Division troopers, there's much more that we can do," he said.

Esperon's remarks is significant. Of 75 to 77 NPA guerrilla fronts in the country by March this year.

Esperon later told the reporters that the 31 billion budget for the campaign has already been released.

"For all the battalions, 600 Marines and 10 infantry battalions of Cafpo (military units) our budget is P 1 billion," he said.

During his visit here, Esperon was accompanied by Lt. Gen. Cardinio Lalin, who was said to have been named one because of Esperon's recommendation. Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez, Inquirer Mindanao

BLOOD FROM SIERRA MADRE

Authorities inspect piles of processed logs worth P1 million that were seized recently and believed to have been from trees cut in the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Left leader tortured by cops, say militants

BILO, LEYTE—A LEADER OF the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) was tortured by policemen and soldiers, the KMP and members of his family said.

Randall Echanis, KMP deputy secretary general, was battered by intelligence agents of the Regional Headquarters police after he was arrested in Bago City on Monday, a KMP statement said yesterday.

Echanis was arrested based on a warrant issued by Judge Ephraim Abando of the Regional Trial Court Branch 37 in Hilongos, Leyte.

Echanis was accused of involvement in the execution of communist guerrillas suspected of being government spies and whose alleged remains were found in a mass grave in Inopacan, Leyte, on Aug. 26, 2006.

Torture route

Echanis was flown to Manila after Base in Cebu City from Bacolod City before he was brought to Hilongos last Tuesday for CMT said.

After he arrived in Hilongos, Echanis was allegedly again subjected to psychological torture by the CMT and the CMT.

Bro Senior Supt. Reynaldo Pasaoa, Negros Occidental police director, denied the statement.

The Hilongos police and soldiers from the Philippine Army's 8th Infantry Division Battalion before midnight of Tuesday to bring Echanis to the provincial jail.

George Almadin, PNP regional legal officer, gave the instruction to transfer Echanis to the provincial jail, the KMP said.

No case

Echanis arrived at the provincial jail in Palo, Leyte, around 4am (8 km from Tacloban City, at 9 a.m. Wednesday.

"The detention of a non-case. He does not basically owe anyone to detain, [some persons were] accused [of] rebellion and [of] crimes. It's worse than physical torture," Echanis' lawyer, Jobert Bajala, said in the same statement.

Amy A. Erebeto and Carlo Gonzaga, Inquirer Visayas and Arroyo Arang in Manila

Breast milk bank established in Baguio

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—A GROUP OF women professionals here put up a day care center that would feature a "breast milk bank" to help working mothers feed their children.

Health officials said the Hub of Hope Day Care Center, located in downtown Baguio, is the first day care center in the country that features a breast milk bank to encourage bonding between a working mother and her child through breastfeeding.

More centers

The Hub of Hope is a project of the Soroptimist International of Hope Baguio. The center was opened on Monday.

Procyon Gaurino, Hub of Hope project head, said the day care center wants to empower working women and strengthen their roles as mothers who would provide the health and nutrition needs of their children to their optimal age of development.

"It is a fact that the number of women who breastfeed their children is already dropping. We learned this center to empower women as mothers, so mothers who can work hard and provide their milk to their children at the same time," Gaurino said.

She said Soroptimist International is hoping to establish 10 more centers in key cities until 2010 to help working women care for their children.

The center is at the Lepso building on Session Road in the city's business district.

Dr. Michaela Ar Fiesta, chief specialist at the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center, said many mothers know the importance of breastfeeding but can't practice it because they devote more time to their jobs.

She said proximity to their children is one of the major reasons working mothers fail to breastfeed.

Citing records from the Department of Health, she said even, by 16.1 percent of Filipino mothers breastfeed their children up to six months.

Origins

"Many mothers say they do not have enough milk or they do not know correct (nursing) techniques [that's why they stop breastfeeding]. Breastfeeding is difficult to sustain beyond the postpartum (after birth) period because the workplace and public areas are not conducive to breastfeeding," Dr. Fiesta said.

Some doctors, a former neonatal nurse and advocate of women and children's rights, said the idea of a breast milk bank started during World War II on Uganda forces in Manila.

'Breastfeeding shows the importance of nature and life...'

The Hub of Hope Day Care Center welcomes support and donations. Contact Procyon Gaurino at mobile no. 09 16-3667462.

Mayor backed on payoff to terrorists

COTABATO CITY—THE PEACE AND Order Council of Kidapawan City in North Cotabato threw its support behind Kidapawan Mayor Rodolfo Caesar Guzman, who admitted paying protection money to an extremist group in a bid to secure the release of hostages.

In a statement issued after its special meeting on Jan. 29, the council, chaired by Lieutenant Colonel Guzman, declared that "there was nothing wrong with the payoff issue with the terrorist group in Mindoro."

The council lauded Guzman for his "private efforts."

Kidapawan had said the PESO,000 fee, gave the mayor Mindoro money from his own pocket—and that aside from trying to save his city from attacks, it was also meant to help identify members of the gang.

He said his office led to the identification of a suspect in the bomb attack on SWAT Mall, which left one person killed and several others injured.

"Police are very happy with the support of Mayor Guzmanque in prosecuting the suspects and that the pay-off is necessary so that we can request the court to issue a warrant of arrest against one Nasir Ahiras," said Senior Supt. Marcelo Ortiz, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in North Cotabato, in a statement.

The Peace and Order Council also blamed media for what it said was "premature broadcast" of Guzman's affidavit against the suspect.

"All our efforts for several months went to nothing because of the premature broadcast of the media which mentioned the name of the suspect," Chief Insp. Leo Ajero, acting Tulunan police chief, said.

Despite the support he got, Guzmanque's critics maintained the pay-off was immoral.

Councilor Gregory Tayo, chair of the city council's committee on good governance and accountability said the payoff would encourage crime.

Alberto O. Bernardo, Inquirer Mindanao

ENSAYO
GYM EQUIPMENT

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

THE HOUSES that will be built in the resettlement areas in Barangay Tagaytay, Camalig, Albay will be packed to serve 330 families displaced by Supertyphoon "Reming." RAFFY LERMA

More 'Reming' survivors in Bicol get new houses

By Jaymee T. Gamil
Daraga, Albay

ALTHOUGH "REMING" STRUCK Albay more than a year ago, nongovernment agencies continue to help rebuild the lives of families left homeless by the supertyphoon.

In Daraga town, the Habitat for Humanity turned over 53 completed houses at the Barangay Anibong Resettlement Site to the displaced residents of Barangay Binitayan, in the same town.

"They were so happy they were crying. They worked hard for this day," Oliver Coronado, Habitat's vice president for external affairs in Bicol, said.

Another 200 families were given assurance of permanent shelter during the groundbreaking ceremonies in Camalig town by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Fifty more houses will be turned over in Naga City to Canaman Sec. Coronado said.

Construction of the 53 houses was funded by Compassion International Host Scholarships Program, which pledged to build 600 homes during the Nord Express Caravan in September last year. The caravan, sponsored by NGOs and **organized** by volunteers from Bicol and Manila, aimed to build 2,000 shelters in Bicol.

A shelter unit, brightly colored and measuring 30 square meters, costs P70,000. It has concrete walls and steel frames that allow a second floor expansion.

Habitat has committed to build around 350 more core shelter units in Camalig and in Libmanan, Camarines Sur, in an agreement it signed with the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Around P18 million has already been allocated for the project, which will take six months to finish, Coronado said.

Permanent homes

In Camalig, Lizzie Coughlin, USAID disaster relief officer, said the 330 displaced families would be able to start new lives with the IOM-USAID shelter project. "They have been in limbo for a long time," she said during the groundbreaking rites.

Camalig was one of the towns hard hit by mudslides after "Reming" dislodged debris from the slopes of Mayon Volcano. Families were moved to temporary evacuation shelters.

Located in upland Sitio Barawen, the Barangay Tagaytay Resettlement Project can accommodate up to 1,000 16-sqm shelters, each occupying an 18-sqm lot. "The multi-unit model will be fully capable of two-story, ensuring that the shelters are hazard-resistant," Ben Akumben, IOM-Bicol project manager, said.

The IOM is set to complete a total of 907 permanent houses and five community centers across Albay and Camarines Sur, through a $1.5-million donation from the USAID.

The two agencies also tied up with the humanitarian organization Save the Children Foundation, which will provide the community centers and livelihood assistance projects in the resettlement sites.

Coughlin praised the folk traditions of "bayanihan" (mutual aid) in the construction of houses in Tagaytay. The site was identified by the provincial government, the task-and utilities built by the municipal government and the National Housing Authority, and the beneficiaries named by the IOM/D.

ABOUT 200 families in Guinobatan, Albay get palm-roofed core shelter and toilet to be used as transitional housing while their houses that were damaged by Supertyphoon Reming in November 2006.

GIVING HOPE TO MILLIONS
CARING FOR COUNTLESS FILIPINOS FAR AND WIDE

WALANG KAPOS,
WALANG KUPAS SA PANALO!

Sa nakaraang Lotto 6/49 draw noong ika-20 ng Enero 2008, isang tao lamang ang nakahula ng tamang anim na numero at napanalunan niya ang napakalaking premyong P133 milyon!

Ang hindi alam ng nakaraanmi, may kabuuang **194,479 kabahagian** pa nalin ang nagwagi ng kabuuang **P57,270,780.00** o mahigit P57-milyon bilang bahagi ng minor prizes ng nasabing draw.

Sa nasabing bilang, 453 ang nanalo ng P20,368,050.00 dahil tumama ang lima sa anim na numerong hinayaan nila. Umabot naman sa 13,880 ang nagwagi ng P13,889,500.00 kung tamaan ang apat sa anim na numerong tumabas. May 166,137 winners din ang nakapaguwi ng kabuuang P18,013,700.00 matapos sila makapili ng tamang tatlong numero sa kombinasyon na lumabas.

Patunay ito sa hindi lamang mga jackpot winners ang nakatatapag-uwi ng malaking halaga ng pera dahil sa pagtaya sa Lotto.

Kaakibat din ng pagdami ng *Prize Fund* para sa 6/49 Lotto ay ang pagtaki ng galing dilong *Charity Fund*. Mula P14,567,496.66 noong ika-03 ng Enero 2008, ito ngayon ay umakabot na sa halagang P139,711,078.21.

Patunay din ito na patuloy ang malnit na pagtangkilik ng mamamayang Pilipino sa Lotto 6/49 sa kabila ng desisyon ng **Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO)** na itaas ang halaga ng minimum na taya mula P13 tungo sa P25.

Sa mga ganitong kapanapan, nagpapasalamat ang PCSO sa lahat ng tumatangkilik sa Lotto 6/49 at sa lahat ng tao sa pinapamahalaan ng ahensya tulad ng Super Lotto 6/45, Mega Lotto 6/42, 6 Digit, 4 Digit, Sweertres (3-digit), Easy Two (2-digit), Keno, Small Town Lottery (STL) at Instasyonal na Sweepstakes Draws.

Tiniyak ng PCSO na agad ang pondong nasa ahensya bilang *Prize Fund* upang bayaran ang lahat ng mga pinapalad sa nagwagi sa nasabing mga laro.

Hindi po naming magagawa ito kung wala ang patuloy ninyong suporta sa mga laro at gawain ng aming ahensya.

Sa ngalan po ng mga kawani at mga nakulungan ng PCSO, maraming salamat po!

MAGING KAPUS, WALANG KUPAS SA PANALO!

ONLINE MORAL CRUSADE

US Pinoys donate to war on graft

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—[illegible]pinos and Filipino-Americans in the United States have been donating dollars in support the drive against graft and corruption in the Philippines.

A civil society group in Pampanga spearheaded their fund-raising.

Started in December last year, the "$1 Island Crusade against Graft and Corruption" has already pooled $9,000, according to Dr. Philip Ofiaz, chair of the Filipino Island Crusade Movement (FICM) which began the online drive.

At least 1,000 Filipinos and Filipino-Americans gave $1, $25 or $50 each, among the donors from seven countries.

The names of the donors and details of the campaign are posted at www.filipinoislandcrusade.com.

Turnover

Ofiaz arrived from the United States on Sunday and handed a check to the Kapampangan Mamagal Inc. (Kmi).

Kmi, formed by elected municipal volunteers of Vice Eddie Panlilio, intends to use the FICM funds for organizing and training under in its good citizenship program in Pampanga, said Arroyll Laquindanum, its director.

Pampanga has been chosen one of the recipients because the "moral leadership" of Panlilio, a Catholic priest-ex house, provided a catalyst for new initiatives in anti-corruption efforts, Ofiaz said.

Panlilio has changed the old system and regulatory system in the quarry industry transforming it into a multibillion-peso revenue source in almost seven months, revenues have reached P136.5 million.

"The governor has also renovated bathhouses in public projects by complying with mirrored bidding law and policies."

New dawn

"The Pampanga experiment can be a new dawn in our nation," said Chris Bertiz in yesterday's gathering of 116 Island Filipino leaders.

Part of the FICM donations will go to the housing and education

> 'Overseas Filipinos really love their country but we are disappointed with our leaders because of pervasive graft and corruption'

program of Gawad Kalinga, Ofiaz said.

"Overseas Filipinos really love their country, but we are disappointed with our leaders because of pervasive graft and corruption. We want to see the transformation of our country as a nation and people," he said.

Recent 19-island organization of Filipinos and Filipino-Americans have been gravitating toward Pampanga after the May 14, 2007 polls.

That was due in part to the Pampanguenos Crusaders USA, Hermagmasin, which has been helping civil society groups in Pampanga to establish networks abroad and offer help to what Ivan Fernando Syjuco, Bishop-Ibelan Asianvis called the "building of a new Hermagmasa."

By that, leaders meant "upholding the lives of poor Kapampangan."

"Our thrust is advancing good citizenship through volunteerism," Hermagmasin's Josie Cuenco said. "Our hearts belong to Pampanga and we want to contribute our bit in helping our people progress."

At Hermagmasin's invitation, Dr. Charlie Cajudi of Gawad Kalinga-US, Chino Cruz of the Ayala Foundation-US, Hon. Bayani of Isabelas (R-8), and Dr. Perfecto Ofiaz of the Filipino-American Leadership Council arrived here to reassure with civil society leaders, Panlilio and Sen. Fernando Wayne Dove Rodriguez.

Proud Filipinos

"It be able to say you're proud of being Filipinos, you have to help back home and help bring about change," said Ofiaz in the lives of your fellow Filipinos," said Cajudi.

Cruz said Panlilio and the Kapampangan's show of unity in the last elections had "inspired us."

"You have become the symbol of hope to many," she said. Our group offers a "way of giving back to our country."

Dacuyan, a retired nurse, has promised to help in pushing in cases involving children in conflict with the law. "We are excited to help in Hermagmasa. We don't want children below 15 years old to be in jail," she said.

Andres, whose group was the prime mover in the protests against a social due attend to the shows "Desperate Housewives," looked at the Pampanga experience as a "shining example" in the Philippines.

Panlilio said good governance, as a progress and goal, was not entirely new since several local officials had been opting to prove that it could be done in the last 20 years.

"What is important is the participation of the people. They have to patronize and coordinate in present and progress-building," he said.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
[illegible]

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National Citizenship	Position
SKY ACADEMY INC. 2nd, 3rd, Delridge Plaza, #7031 San Antonio St., Poblac de Magallanes, Makati City	Ryan Ken Rob Korean	General Manager
CHO-CAREER SEAFOOD & SHAMPOON RESTAURANT CORP. [illegible] St., Cavendish, San Juan City	Shenfeng Cao Chinese	Cook
SAN CARLOS BIOSCIENCES, INC. 1387 Vasco de Gama Corner, G.T.B. Ave. Ext., Makati City	Shahjahan Yadlad Indian	Project Executive
KOREAN AIRLINES CO., LTD. 2nd Flr. LPL Main Bldg., Jupiter St., Makati Village, Makati City	Yoon Lee Korean	Cargo Sales Manager
GRV BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6811 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Anna Lampungmai Thai	Sports Desk Operations Officer
GRV BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6811 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Andy Foong Mun Kit Malaysian	Sports Desk Operations Executive
GRV BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6811 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Beng Meiwei Singaporean	Sports Desk Operations Officer
GRV BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6811 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yew Hoong Tan Malaysian	Sports Desk Operations Officer
SHARKI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS., INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, 6811 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Ah Zhao Chinese	Technology Appointed Consultant
SHARKI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS., INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, 6811 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Ashley Li Chinese	Corporate Consultant
SHARKI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS., INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, 6811 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Jeremy Xu Chinese	Account Manager
SHARKI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS., INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, 6811 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Yunlun Hu Chinese	Product Manager
SHARKI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS., INC. 109 Yuchengco Tower, 6811 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Jung Sun Chinese	Consultant
THE LEADERS CONSULTING & DEVELOPING GROUP INC. Lot 6-B1 Golden Mosque Phase 1, Purok 5, Brgy. Mandaue-Manila, Panabo City, Mandaue City, Mandaueyong City	Wang Jun Jun Korean	General Manager
SIMSON CACHE TRADING CORPORATION 114 Bo Kimlan Highway, Bondoc, Valenzuela City	Xuesong Li Chinese	Consultant
SIMSON CACHE TRADING CORPORATION 114 Bo Kimlan Highway, Bondoc, Valenzuela City	Shaoyang Wang Chinese	Consultant
SIMSON CACHE TRADING CORPORATION 114 Bo Kimlan Highway, Bondoc, Valenzuela City	Shaoqing Li Chinese	Consultant
PHIL-KO PARTY TRAVEL, INC. Phil-Media Luxury Coast, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hyeyun Kim Korean	Area Directorate Manager
PHIL-KO PARTY TRAVEL, INC. Phil-Media Luxury Coast, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Kook Kim Korean	Advertising Manager
PHIL-KO PARTY TRAVEL, INC. Phil-Media Luxury Coast, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Mingyu Jung Korean	Operation Manager
JUZ SURL INC. 2/F Tabacalera Cir., Sen. Gil Puyat cor. Sen. Agapito Joson, Carmona, Cavite City	Lenson Bin Abdullah Singaporean	Operation Manager
JUST IN CASE EXCS CORP. Globe Tollerson Plaza 1, 2nd Flr. Pioneer cor. Madison St., Mandaluyong City	Tameeza Lee Korean	Assistant Operation Manager
JUST IN CASE EXCS CORP. Globe Tollerson Plaza 1, 2nd Flr. Pioneer cor. Madison St., Mandaluyong City	Jeeyoung Lee Korean	General Manager
PEOPLESUPPORT (PHILIPPINES), INC. PeopleSupport Center, Ayala Ave. cor. Dil Flagal Ave., Makati City	Thomas Cornell Pryder American	Director, Workforce Management
YOSHIN PRECISION EQUIPMENT CO., LTD. Unit 1-5, 3/F, AFMC Bldg., 7th Ave. cor. 31st cor. Eastlink, Laguna Village, Makati City	Takanobu Yaguchi Japanese	Chief Representative
SMA NETWORK, INC. 2368 Antonio Cruelo, 12535 cor. Timog Ave., Diliman, Quezon City	Victor Rapsbert Alvarez American	Artist

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. [illegible]
Director, Regional Director

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
[illegible]

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PUBLIC BIDDING FOR THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN SECURITY REQUIREMENT OF 56 SECURITY GUARDS FOR 2008-2010 (2 YEARS)

The OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, through its contracting organization, intends to apply the sum of ONE MILLION EIGHTY THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED EIGHTY PESOS ONLY (P1,080,480.00) as the PUBLIC BIDDING FOR THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN SECURITY REQUIREMENT OF 56 SECURITY GUARDS FOR 2008-2010 (2 YEARS), including the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be awarded to the lowest calculated and responsive bid, as detailed in the notice of the ABC, and be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN now invites eligible bidders to the Public Bidding for the Procurement of Security Services. The participation of an eligible bidder is contained in Section 4 of the Bidding Documents. [illegible]

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pre-bid criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act (RA) 5487, as amended by Presidential Decree (PD) 11, otherwise known as the Private Security Agency Law, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) issued by the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Ombudsman Bids and Awards Committee (OBAC) and examine the Bidding Documents on the address given below during Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from January 31, 2008 to February 7, 2008.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before February 14, 2008, 10:00 a.m. Late bids shall not be accepted. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following forms and amount:

FORM OF SECURITY	MINIMUM AMOUNT OF SECURITY (% OF ABC TO BID ON)
1. Cash, Cashier's Check, Certified Check, Manager's Check, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank Guarantee	Two and half percent (2 1/2%)
3. Surety Bond (GSIS only)	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)

SCHEDULE OF BIDDING ACTIVITIES

1. Pre-Bid Conference	–	February 12, 2008 @ 10:00 AM BAC Secretariat Office Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
2. Issuance of Bid and Eligibility Documents	–	February 13, 2008 BAC Secretariat Office Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
3. Deadline of submission of Eligibility Documents & Bids	–	February 14, 2008 @ 10:00 AM BAC Secretariat Office Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
4. Opening of Bids	–	February 14, 2008 @ 10:00 AM BAC Secretariat Office Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.

The OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
2/F Tabacalera Bldg, Agham Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. 929-9032 local 101 – 929-9190
Email: bac@ombudsman.gov.ph
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.ph

Dated: JANUARY 28, 2008
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 01-2008

PUBLIC BIDDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF TWO (2) UNITS 6-CASE CONTRACT FOR PRINTING AND OF FIVE (5) UNITS OF CHARGE BUILDING X-RAY UNIT

The PHILHEALTH Regional Office IX, (PRO IX), through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2007, intends to apply the sum of PHP 3,272,000.00 as the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of Two Units 6-Case Contract Printing and Five (5) Units Office and Charge Building x-ray Unit. Late offer upon receiving request shall have the following general specifications/requirements:

1. The Delivery of request materials between the proposed Office and Storage Space/Building shall not exceed fifteen (15) meters;
2. They shall be made of reinforced concrete;
3. The Office Space/Building Storage shall be located along the major routes of the following places in Lanao City:
   1) City proper, it shall not be more than Two Hundred Meters (200m) away from the capital routes of Public Utility Vehicles, Jeepney, Lanao City;
   2) Along Marawila Highway starting from Corner Saint Claremore in Agan until Fourth Boulevard, Brgy. Kalilangan, Lanao City;
   3) along Marawila Highway starting from Mrs. Tagum Street to the junction connecting the two Marawila Highway and Dimaporo Boulevard and Mrs. Hermenegildo de los Santos, Kalilangan Lanao City and Tagoloan, Quezon;
   4) Along Iligan-Lanao Road, in Lanao Sibonga Road;
   5) Along Lanao Dimaporo Road starting from Mindanao Sanitarium, Brgy. Mandaue, to Lanao Saint Central Terminal, Brgy. Kalilangan, Lanao;
   6) Lanao Saint Central Terminal;
4. Reasonable roads to accept they shall be maintained/constructed, office space/building floor shall be concrete, be finished;
5. Office Space/building shall have a total area of One Thousand Forty Five Square Meters (1045 sq.m.) with an office room of at least Eighteen Square Meters (18 sq. m.) but not exceeding Twenty Square Meters (20 sq. m.) and a comfort room of at least Four Square Meters (4 sq. m.) but not more than Six Square Meters (6 sq. m.) Provided with an office comfort room bigger than the normal provided that shall be proportion provided that the interior area shall be given first;
6. Proposed building/storage house floor required twelve (12) CONTAINER(S) shall be accepted provided that the interior space shall be given first of choice.

For detailed specifications/descriptions please contact the BAC Secretariat on the numbers stated below.

Retail Sale Limit:

Proposed Retail Sale shall not exceed Php100.00/unit. (Mon-Office Building)
Proposed Retail Sale shall not exceed Php100.00/unit. (Storage Building)
Liquidation Rate shall not exceed 10% per year.

Approved Budget: Php 3,272,000.00

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

PHILHEALTH now invites pooled Bids from eligible bidders for the Public Bidding for the Procurement of Two (2) Units 6-Case Contract Printing and Five (5) Units Office and Charge Building of Lanao City. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pre-bid criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens pursuant to Republic Act (RA) 5183, as amended by Presidential Decree (PD) 11, otherwise known as the Private Security Agency Law, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) issued by the Philippine National Police (PNP). Only Bidders/bidders who pass the eligibility check (where applied) in accordance with the Bidding Documents. The bidder of the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo to the post-qualification steps in order to finally determine its compliance with all the bid and other requirements. If the project is to be delivered over several calendar years, only the first year's work is subject to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bid (LCRB) determination after the deadline of the date of the Post-Qualification.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the PHILHEALTH Regional Office - Bids and examine the Bidding Documents on the address given below during Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from January 31, 2008 to February 7, 2008.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before February 14, 2008, 10:00 a.m. Late bids shall not be accepted. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following forms and amount:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount (% of Approved Budget for the Contract to bid On)	Amount of Bid Security
1. Cash, Cashier's Check, Certified Check, Manager's Check, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)	Php32,720.00
2. Bank Guarantee	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)	Php 81,800.00
3. Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)	Php 81,800.00
4. Foreign Government Guarantee	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)	Php 81,800.00

Bid opening shall be on **February 14, 2008**, 10:00 a.m. at the Conference Room of PHILHEALTH Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative and witnesses in attendance at the address below.

The attendance sheet shall be the sole basis in the conference room evidence.

PHILHEALTH reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philhealth Regional Office No.IX (PRO IX)
Brgy. II, Cawilan, Cmdng. Pascual Blvd. (Dipolog-Dapitan Highway)
Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte
Tel No. (065) 212-7552
Facsimile No. (065) 212-6406
e-mail address: philhealthrx@yahoo.com

Engr. MIGUEL T. MACHUCAO
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

AIR FRANCE KLM

Arriving this summer

A bigger aircraft.

More seats.

Valuable fare offers.

The Reliable Airline KLM

Watch out for more details in newspapers.
Or log on to www.klm.com.ph

Red Bull equalizes

By Marvang R. Castillo

JUSTIN VALDEZUELA SCORED 11 of his 16 points in the fourth period and Mick Dennis dropped a clutch three-pointer last night as Red Bull edged Purefoods, 93-89, to draw level after two games of their Second PBA-Philippine Cup semifinal series at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Ira Lucio also squared to separate series stats, thanks here, wrapping an 86-77 decision of the Aces after getting 24 points and 13 rebounds from Kelly Williams.

The only time that the Purefoods were not in the lead was at 0-2, as their outrighting defense kept the Tender Juicy Giants at bay while they led by as many as 15 points to wrest momentum in the series.

"This win just put the burden of adjustment on Purefoods," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, whose crowds got beaten in the series opener on Sunday. "We'll see what they'll do on Friday (Game 3)."

"I think, from hereon, this will be a defensive series. Each team is trying to stop the other, not just to outscore them," Guiao added.

The Tender Juicy Giants rallied from several double-digit deficits in the fourth period, their last going roaring three minutes 10:59 after an 11-0 run topped by a three-point play by Jayson Yap.

But Dennis stopped the run with a trey with 3:20 to go and the Reds's defense simply did not give the Giants a chance to mount another comeback.

The score:
First Game

RED BULL (G) - Sagan 15, Adams 10, Valdezuela 16, Yeng 12, Cruz 9, Perez 7, Dennis 6, Pinto 0, Sajonia 2, Reyes 0

PUREFOODS (S) - Ong 2, Ilustre 0, Lucio 10, Green 1, Pingris 6, Ilog 0, Evangelista 0, Mallari 5, Salvador 2, Castillo 2, Ayeni 7, Yeri

Quarters: 23-12, 44-32, 66-53, 89-86

Second Game

VIA (G) - Williams 24, Custodio 16, Yeo 13, Miranda 11, Asoque 9, Sumalinog 6, Sandoval 5, Mendoza 3, Gil 0

ALASKA (7) - Miller 32, Chan 14, Cahilig 10, Dela Cruz 10, Jarin 6, Ganuelas-Rosser 5, Simon 5, Reavis 3, Lanete 3, Razon 0, Espinas 0, Jumoad 0

Quarters: 21-18, 39-37, 60-54, 80-77

All-Star voting starts Feb. 1

OTHER THAN A SHOT at the title, an added incentive awaits the coaches of the two finalists of the PBA Smart-Philippine Cup.

To the two coaching finalists belong the privileges of calling the shots in this year's All-Star game set in Bacolod this summer.

The champion skeds of the season-opening conference will handle the South team while the runner-up handles the North squad.

Red Bull's Yeng Guiao's and Purefoods' Jayson Gregorio are currently battling it out in a best-of-seven series for the right to advance to the Finals, with Alaska's Tim Cone and Sta. Lucia's Lloyd Hernandez squaring off in the other semifinal pairing, also a best-of-seven affair.

Last year in Baguio City, Barangay Ginebra's Jeng Aldeguer scored the North squad to a 145-142 come-from-behind win over the South, handled by Cone.

Beginning Feb. 1, PBA fans can cast their votes either at the game venues, e-mail or through website www.pba.ph.

A plus METRO
Editor: Lira Kaur C. Dipasupil

CA asked to void EO 003 banning contraceptives

By Leila B. Salaverria

TWENTY RESIDENTS FROM DEPRESSED AREAS in the City of Manila yesterday asked the Court of Appeals to nullify Executive Order 003 which they said deprived them of their right to practice responsible parenthood.

Among those who filed the petition were Alexander Pesino and his wife, Vercita, who have six children. Alexander works as a guard in a billiard hall and earns around P350 to P400 a day.

According to Vercita, she used to get her supply of oral contraceptives from the Manila Health Center. But after then Manila Mayor Lito Atienza signed the order to implement the provisions of the EO which "upholds natural family planning" and discourages "the use of artificial methods of contraception like condoms, pills, intrauterine devices, surgical sterilization, and others."

They said the respondents—the Office of the City Mayor and the Manila City Health Department—in implementing the EO, prejudiced their right to health and well-being.

According to the petitioners, the ban resulted in the deterioration of their reproductive health by depriving them of access to health care and health development and resulting in numerous pregnancies. The poor are the most affected, they added.

Economic hardship

"As the meantime, petitioners' children suffer the consequences of economic hardship and higher risk of infant mortality brought about by the strain of multiple unintended pregnancies left unaddressed by the respondents' taken implementation of a natural family planning program to the sole exclusion of access to available and affordable artificial methods of contraception," they said.

Lawyer Harry Roque, who represents the petitioners, said they filed the case only now because his clients were apprehensive about the implementation of filing a suit against Atienza while he was still mayor.

Atienza was appointed environment secretary last year after he finished his third and last term as city mayor in June.

Diosdado Peñaflorida, who also represents the petitioners, said her clients met earlier with Mayor Alfredo Lim to talk to him about recalling the order, but the latter seemed reluctant to do so.

She added that it was better to let the court decide whether or not the EO violated the Constitution and the country's laws on responsible parenthood.

They claimed that the EO is not only natural family planning methods and thus imposes a single or unitary view of family planning on all Filipino residents, depriving them of any "real" or "informed" choice.

ACCOMPANIED by her son, a woman shows media a copy of their petition seeking the nullification of an order discouraging the use of artificial family planning methods in the City of Manila. JEROME ASHLEY ANCHETA

Among those who filed the petition were Alexander Pesino and his wife, Vercita, who have six children. Alexander works as a guard in a billiard hall and earns around P350 to P400 a day.

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TRO

The Petitioners also asked the court to issue a temporary restraining order against the implementation of the EO which "upholds natural family planning" and discourages "the use of artificial methods of contraception like condoms, pills, intrauterine devices, surgical sterilization, and others."

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Lung Center exec says raps vs him already junked

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE DIRECTOR OF THE LUNG Center of the Philippines who was ordered removed from his post on allegations of graft has questioned the filing of charges against him.

Dr. Jeannie Rubio is asking how the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission could file charges against him in the Office of the Ombudsman when the latter had already dismissed "six evidently identical" complaints against him.

In an interview the other day, Rubio said that hospital employees and former LCP Employees Association president Guillermo Wadling Jose also brought the complaints against him to the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel.

According to him, the complaints were dismissed by both the Ombudsman and OGCC.

"They [complainants] have made a habit out of removing directors here at the Lung Center," Rubio said, adding that his predecessors at the hospital were also relieved from their posts.

The LCP director claimed that the "unsecured employees" of the hospital lodged graft complaints against previous directors as well and may have powers accustomed to getting their way.

"They could have simply asked me to go and I would not question it but to say that I stole as the reason for my removal is too much," Rubio said.

According to him, he has maintained a clean slate during his more than 30 years in government service and it would be "unimaginable and the peak of unfairness" for such charges to be filed now, when I am at the sunset of my life."

On Dec. 14 last year, then-Vice Secretary Eduardo Ermita signed an order dismissing Rubio from government service based on the recommendation of the PAGC.

The PAGC had recommended that criminal charges be filed against Rubio for violating procurement laws when he entered into a contract with the Iemura Design Systems and Equipment Corp. and CEO International Trade Corp. for the construction of an art gallery and a piece of glass sculpture.

According to the PAGC, there was an "unforeseen contingency requiring the immediate construction of the art gallery and glass sculpture, nor are these ordinary or regular office supplies and equipment contracted by him."

The PAGC also alleged that Rubio ordered the P4 million he purchased medicine and equipment through a contract with the New San Jose Builders Inc. without first conducting a bidding.

The aforesaid order, however, has not been implemented pending Rubio's filing of an appeal.

DID YOU KNOW

TODAY, Jan. 31, is the 120th death anniversary of St. John Bosco or Don Bosco, the Italian founder of the Salesian Society, an organization that works "where their labor works for the young, especially the poor, and encourages boys to enter the priesthood.

Two schools in Metro Manila were established in his honor—the Don Bosco Technical College in Mandaluyong City and Don Bosco Technical Institute of Makati.

Cyril C. Bautista, Inquirer Research

Hairloss is wrecking her life and she doesn't know why.

Thinning hair makes a woman look older. When your hair's health, shine and bounce weaken, it seems your personality is likewise affected. Self-consciousness, diminished self-esteem, even bouts of depression may occur.

Most women who have gone through this harrowing experience say they tried everything to stop hairloss, from special treatments at the salon, to a whole range of over-the-counter products. But nothing worked. Sadly, many "remedies" may have actually made the condition worse. Until they found out the reason why they were losing hair, little could be done to end the problem.

Possible reasons for hairloss.

Women's hairloss can be caused by hormonal changes. Female Pattern Baldness (or Androgenetic Alopecia) is a reaction to male hormones in the body (androgens) which can weaken a woman's hair. Other factors can be stress, poor nutrition, illnesses and reactions to certain medications, childbirth and menopause, frequent coloring, curling, straightening, and many more. Most causes of hairloss, when they are correctly identified, can be treated with good results.

Getting the facts on why you are losing hair.

Trichology is the study of the functions and problems of hair. A trichologist is someone who has been educated in this subject and is qualified to determine the reasons why your hair is not in good health.

Where do you find a trichologist? One name that has been synonymous with Professional Trichology in the Philippines for more than 25 years: Svenson. Svenson trichologists will examine your hair and scalp and give you advice on what to do.

A trichologist – what does it cost?

Nothing. Svenson trichologists offer an in-depth Hair & Scalp analysis totally free of charge.

Pre-hairloss symptoms.

Before your hair starts falling out, be aware of early warning signs such as persistent dandruff, flaking, and scalp irritations. Beat hairloss – see a trichologist when you see these signs!

These visible indications are embarrassing, and when combined with dirt in the atmosphere, shampoo chemicals or excess sebum, they can block follicles, badly affecting hair growth.

Treatments to help your hair.

Depending on the findings of your Hair & Scalp analysis, you can decide on treatment programs including:

ULTRA CLAY REMINERALIZER – deep cleans scalp, creates healthier environment for growth. Hair becomes thicker, shinier, roots lush.

ULTRA-CLOSE VOLUMIZER – quickly controls and stops hair fall, helps restore original hairness, volume and softness.

SCALP CORRECTIVE – eliminates dandruff, flaking and other irritations, returns scalp to normal state, prevents recurrent hairloss.

Make an appointment today to see a trichologist! Free of charge. Call Svenson at 892-4361, 204-0851(Cebu).

Manila cops to Mindanao in search of clues to Yap's death

By Tina G. Santos

THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT will be sending investigators to Misamis Occidental province in Mindanao to find clues that could help them investigate the circumstances that led to the death of former Mayor Roy Yap of Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental, who was shot dead the other day outside a Mindanao town.

A still unidentified man shot Yap as he was stepping out of a restaurant, were also hurt in the shooting after they were hit by stray bullets.

"A team of homicide investigators are going to Mindanao. They might find clues there that may be helpful to our investigators," said Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, MPD director.

Investigators yesterday were trying to take the statements of the former mayor's family members. "We have to ask them if Mayor Yap had been receiving threats, and who and why they were threatening him," Rosales said.

On the other hand, Yap's Boloc watch and P50,000 in cash, which were earlier reported to be missing, turned out to be in the safe of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

Chief Insp. Gerardo Rosales, head of the MPD homicide division, said he first learned of Yap's missing valuables when he met with the former mayor's family.

"Earlier, I planned to summon members of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology since they were the first to respond to the crime scene," Rosales told the business.

But one of Yap's relatives received a call from the BJMP saying they had Yap's watch and money," he added.

SECURITY. A fight at the Manila City Hall after former Mayor Roy Yap was killed inside the premises (the other day).

'We need new justice hall for Manila'

By Allison W. Lopez

THE MANILA REGIONAL TRIAL courts may be clustered together, but it has yet to find a new and more secure home.

In the wake of a killing incident outside her courtroom on Tuesday morning, Judge Zenaida Laguna yesterday urged the Supreme Court to speed up the construction of a Hall of Justice to ease the safety of both employees and litigants.

"If we have a Hall of Justice, we would feel more safe. This is a public place," she said, referring to the present setup.

Her boss, the former mayor of Sapang Dalaga in Misamis Occidental province, was shot to death in front of a restaurant in Ongpin to settle for a murder case when he was shot several times by a lone gunman on the fourth floor corridor. Her bodyguard and an assistant were also injured in the incident.

The Manila City Hall has been home to 36 branches of the Manila RTC, 36 branches of the Metropolitan Trial Court, and the city prosecutors' office for decades.

"Manila is the premier city, and we have the biggest number of courts in the Philippines, so it is only right that we give a Hall of Justice of our own," echoed Rudy Verzosa, clerk of court of Branch 19.

Bonoan-a said he was unable to sleep Tuesday night after witnessing the incident, with images of Yap slumped outside the courthouse and bloodstains all over still fresh in his mind.

SAGUNA

"I'm fine, I'm more relaxed now," Laguna said, adding that she herself had not received any death threats.

"This is the first time this happened in my court. We've just doing our job. I pray whenever I make a decision," she added.

Mayor Alfredo Lim testified yesterday that the Hall of Justice is now already out of the his hands. The Supreme Court, he added, already chose the Government Services Insurance System building from across SM Manila over the old Jai Alai structure on the site of the new Hall of Justice, but has yet to complete the project.

"The problem is funding. I don't know if there is any funding fund or if they're still going to raise it," the mayor said.

City Administrator Ata Marcos said they already instructed the security force from 30 to 36 and added 10 guards in the existing 16-man force. Lim also ordered an overhaul of the City Hall security plan.

The greatest insult

ON TARGET
RANDAL TALIO

A PALACE INSIDER TOLD ME over dinner that a group of Cabinet men confronted President Macapagal-Arroyo about her favorite Cabinet member who allegedly advised her to go hard on the media.

Answering the media people who covered the Dominada Manila standoff was reportedly this Cabinet member's idea.

The other Cabinet members' Jim's call them "drawn"): didn't want a "war" with the media.

They likened their compliance for the time the President was in.

Ohhh reportedly stood by her fair-haired boy.

She told the down the opposition the Cabinet official for stirring in his pot when he could have run for a seat in the House of Representatives in the last elections, and won.

Oh my gosh, Ma'am, how could you be so naive!

As a congressman, he wouldn't have the perks and privileges he allegedly enjoys in the office:

+Police bodyguards for his own girlfriends.

+Having a relative easily get government contracts.

+Having an organ in his pocket.

+Being feared by the police.

+Being feared by "jueteng" lords.

If he would resist the power now held by Undersecretary Antonio Villar, the no-nonsense anti-smuggling czar, this Cabinet member's power would be nonexistent. Even the Marcoses in their heyday were limited people in public.

* * *

When Mike Arroyo and I were still the best of friends, he got upset with fellow columnist Beiah Tinsay-Tordesillas over an item he had written about Mike's stay in a €30,000-a-day suite in Las Vegas.

Ms. Arroyo told me over a couple of drinks he would slap or beat up Beiah if he met him in republic.

Dodd Mike not to do that because it would be embarrassing of his country.

He wouldn't listen. He said he got very offended by Beiah's derogatory item about him in his column.

"Well, Mike," I looked into his eyes, "get ready for a big fight of your life because I know Beiah still not one's easy Enrile's fight."

I told the President's husband he should be on watch for the coming Kuwit from Mindanao.

It's a good thing El Abrotes and The Kuwits they never met in public.

* * *

I'd like to thank lawyer Archie Aaron for helping "laundering my key bills" for the rape case's primary agent Swiss national Jan Nils Ellinger in the Department of Justice.

Aaron gave his services to the rape victim for free.

Lim orders crackdown on fake diploma shops

By Allison W. Lopez

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM yesterday ordered Manila Police District director, Chief Supt. Rodolfo Magtibay to "immediately embarrass his cap" drawing those persons of establishments selling fake documents, including diplomas and school records.

Lim gave the order after receiving numerous complaints from residents about the prolif- eration of forged documents submitted by visa applicants, including bank certificates, school records and police clearances.

He warned that he would not renew the applications for business permit of establishments that harbor or even rent space to those "diploma mills."

The mayor has also been dubbed "basic University" because anyone can get a fake school, high diploma or transcript of records of the university or school of his choice from establishments in the area.

"These schemers have limited so many people. Their student-customers should know that they can be expelled from their school when their scheme is discovered," Lim said.

He added that those involved in the illegal production of fake certificates would be charged with falsification of public documents.

14 barge crew members nabbed for fuel pilferage

By Tina G. Santos

FOURTEEN CREW MEMBERS of two barges were arrested by the Manila police after they allegedly caught trying to siphon a ship in Tondo, Manila, yesterday morning.

Arrested were Edwin Pomarada, 69; Allan Gonzaul, 49; Efrain Bautista, 42; Florentino Cardinas, 46; Danilo Bautista, 51; Ronilo de la Cruz, 36; Nelson Roldan, 27; Jun Montoya, 32; Randy Agera, 33; Raul Labarrete, 27; Ferdinand de la Cruz, 30; Edwin de la Cruz, 31; Johnny Cutillo, 32 and Joje Cuesa, 24.

The suspects were crew members of the MR Prince Leonard Allen and the MR Prince Alen.

Supt. Napoleon Ganyon, chief of the MPD District Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (DAOCTF), said the 14 men were caught siphoning fuel from a barge at around 10 a.m. at Pier 6 of the Manila North Harbor in Tondo.

The arrest followed months long surveillance operations conducted by members of the MPD-DAOCTF, he said.

Ganyon added that they conducted the operation following a report about the theft of fuel from several ships while there were docked off Manila bay.

An investigation showed that the MR Prince Allen and MR Prince Alen would siphon fuel from different barges docked at at the Manila North Harbor.

The stolen fuel would then be transferred to the MR Prince Leonard which in turn would deliver it to factories who sold the product to clients.

The suspects managed to steal almost 40,000 liters of oil amounting to P600,000, the police said.

Charges of qualified theft and violating economic safeguard are set to be filed against the suspects.

MetroBriefs

P1.5M lost in QC fire

An 80-by-1,000-sq.m. garment's two-story house in Quezon City just before dawn yesterday. Engr. Amel Tuazon, spokesperson chief of the Quezon City Fire Department, said the fire started to engulf the house of former barangay councilor Balbino de Castro at 2 Dr. Lazcano St., Barangay Paligsa- han at 3:06 a.m. "Fortunately, Mr. De Castro and his family members were able to get out of their house before it was razed by the fire," Rancio said this morning. The fire reached the third alarm before it was put out at 4:27 a.m. he said. Damage to property was placed at P1.5 million. The cause of the fire is still being investigated. (Marian Ramos)

2 suspected salvage victims found in Las Piñas

THE BULLET-RIDDLED bodies of two tattooed men were discovered by passersalvage morning in Las Piñas City, according to the police. Believed to be victims of summary executions, the unidentified men were found sprawled dead on the pavement of Aviatrix Street near a segment of BF International, in Pamplona 3, Las Piñas. The police said the first victim, who was also tattooed, had multiple bullet and with tattoos all over his body. The second victim, on the other hand, was about 6'0" tall, fair-complexioned, medium-built and sported long tattoos on his right hand and both legs. In his report, SPO1 Leonardo Nagaoat of the Las Piñas police said security guard Antonio Unay was on the way to work when he stumbled upon the bodies at 6:30 a.m. (LV Ga)

Marikina is Most Business-Friendly City

FOR THE THIRD consecutive year, Marikina City was named the "Most Business-Friendly City" in Metro Manila by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. According to Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando, the PCCI credited the local government's business and economic development programs for the feat. In a statement, Fernando said the city officials have made it a priority to attract investors and facilitate transactions in the city to make the business climate conducive to investors and entrepreneurs. Kristine L. Alave

Name of the Procuring Entity: MUNICIPALITY OF JAMBAY

Project Reference No.: 001-B

Name of the Project: Purchase and Delivery of Medicines for Primary Health Care Program of the Municipality of Jambay

Location: Jambay, Iloilo

Brief Description: Purchase and Delivery of Medicines for Primary Health Care Program of the Municipality of Jambay

Approved Budget for the Contract: Two Million Nine Hundred Ninety Nine Thousand Pesos (P2,999,000.00)

Delivery Period: Complete delivery within 90 days upon receipt of Purchase Order

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipality of Jambay, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and to submit bids for the medicines project.

Bidders should have completed, within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Philippine Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) Resolution No. 09-2007, which is available, together with the Bidding Documents, from the BAC Secretariat.

All bidders must submit their Statement of Eligibility and Bid Security in the form of a Manager's Check issued by a reputable bank payable to the Municipality of Jambay, Iloilo.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	TIME/DATE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 12-21, 2008
2. Pre-bid Conference	February 14, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.
3. Opening of Bids	February 28, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.

Bid documents are not available and no prospective bidders, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) to the Municipality of Jambay, Iloilo.

The Municipality of Jambay reserves its responsibility whatsoever to accept/reject or cancel any bid(s) and to waive any irregularities in the proceedings of the Bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ROBERT TRIADOR
Bids Chairman

PDI, Jan. 31, 2008

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

This Land Bank of the Philippines invites eligible contractors/suppliers/manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the contract as mentioned.

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date of Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline of Receipt of Bids	Date of Opening of Bids
1 unit Supply and Delivery of the Operating and Application 1,000 Plus Licenses (P.O. Nos. 000-001, 000-002, 000-003, 000-004, 000-005, 000-006)	To be announced	February 7, 2008 (10 AM)	February 19, 2008 (1:00 PM)	Immediately after the deadline

Bid documents are not available to the Procurement Department starting January 31, 2008 upon payment of applicable non-refundable fee indicated below:

The Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the Procurement Department Bidding Room, 2nd Floor, LBP Leasing and Finance Center, Macapagal Avenue cor. Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, Pasay City.

Please address any queries to the Head Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee at telephone nos. 551-3000 local 3703.

Land Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process and to reject all bids at any time prior to the award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(SGD) BAC AWARDS COMMITTEE

dti

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING/ CONSULTATION

The Department of Trade and Industry will hold a public hearing/ consultation on the "Proposed Amendments of Department Administrative Order No. 2, Series of 1993 particularly Chapter IV on Advertising and Sales Promotion" on 05 February 2008, Tuesday, 2:00 P.M. at the DTI/NSO Hall, 3F, DTI Building, 361 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City, Alternate: The Director on or before 04 February 2008.

The full text of the proposed Rules can be accessed at the http://www.dti.gov.ph or copy secured at DTI, Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection (BTRCP).

You may submit your written comments at fpl.btrcp@dti.gov.ph or mail to/visit BTRCP, 2/F DTI Building, 361 Senator Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City, Attention: The Director on or before 04 February 2008.

For further inquiries, please call at telephone number 751-3334 local 2222, 2223, 2227, 2228, 2229.

PDI, Jan. 31, 2008

Thai generals back newly elected gov't

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S TOP generals backed the new elected government on Wednesday, with the ex-ruling coup leader saying he still "loves" ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra, whose allies are again in power.

Gen. Surayuth Chulanont, who toppled Thaksin's government in September 2006, accusing the billionaire of widespread corruption and of disloyalty to the king, urged his successors to move on.

Since the coup, Thaksin has been in self-imposed exile in Britain as the military spurred a slate of corruption investigations against him.

But Thaksin's allies staged a dramatic comeback in elections last month, and his political ally Samak Sundaravej is now leading the country's new prime minister.

Surayuth told reporters that he had spoken to Thaksin twice by phone this month, but added that they had not discussed his possible return to Thailand.

"The calls were arranged by people who are connected over the country's situation," he told reporters after returning from a trip to the Middle East.

"Our talks were straightforward and frank, but I did not discuss his return to Thailand and neither of us made any concessions," Surayuth said.

"We still love each other and our brotherhood remains intact."

Samak and Thaksin attended the same military preparatory school, but at different times. Senior Army military school graduates are expected part to. That political alliances.

SONTHI

THAKSIN

The remarks were a sharp turnaround for Sonthi, who in the wake of the coup implied that he feared for his life while serving as Army chief under Thaksin.

"I would like to offer support for the new government and wish everyone, including the opposition, to support the government," he said.

Samak's People Power Party (PPP) understood Sonthi's ex-Democrats, and insisted they would not try to exact revenge against the junta.

Thanit General Sonthi for his support of the new government, and I want to reaffirm what we have said from early on, that there will be no revenge taken against the junta," said Thaksin's spokesperson Sitthichai Pasuk, who is now a top PPP official.

Sonthi retired as Army chief in September last year to take a post as deputy prime minister in the military-installed government.

The current Army chief, Gen. Anupong Paojinda, also a key leader of the coup, said Samak's government should be judged on its performance.

"If the government improves our country, everyone—not just me—must support the government," he told reporters.

That media have widely reported that the PPP was locked in a tug of war with the military over who would fill the post of defense minister in the next cabinet.

The military was pushing to get a general in the post, but reports said on Wednesday that Samak would keep the job for himself.

Samak was meeting with party leaders on Wednesday to hammer out his cabinet line-up, which is expected to be finalized within days.

Sonthi said that the military would not complain if the defense ministry was headed by a civilian.

"The military is disciplined to developed, foreign ministries, civilians are defense ministers. The military should not notice and salute its own leader," the general said.

He also rejected criticism that his coup had been a failure, having ensured Thaksin only on say the former prime minister's supporters regroup and take power again at the ballot box.

But Sonthi said he believed that another coup was unlikely.

"Personally I think a coup is no longer possible because the people would not support it," he said. AFP

France warns off hostile bidders for bank

PARIS—THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT warned on Tuesday to fight off any hostile takeover bid for Societe Generale as the bank's chief faced mounting pressure to stand down over multi-billion euro rogue trade losses.

Finance Minister Christine Lagarde warned the bank was "in crisis," calling on Societe Generale's board to decide the fate of chief Daniel Bouton, following the losses of 4.82 billion euros (US$7.1 billion).

Although Lagarde said she was "not convinced" the bank needed a "change of captain," President Nicolas Sarkozy seemed to cast Bouton's role as head of the chain of command on Monday.

"I don't think Bouton has any choice but to leave," argued the head of the French Senate B. banco committee, ruling party deputy Jean Arthuis.

As the bank's directors council on turmoil it could be a takeover target, Prime Minister Francois Fillon warned the government "will not allow Societe Generale to be the target of hostile raids." "Societe Generale is a great French bank ... and (the government) intends it to remain a great French bank and global project," Fillon said.

France's top two banks, BNP Paribas and Credit Agricole, are said to be poised to pounce on the ailing giant, which employs some 130,000 people. Bouton's HSBC and Barclays have also been named as potential suitors.

Takeover rumors pushed shares in the bank, France's third biggest by market capitalization, up 4.94 percent to 77.60 euros in mid-afternoon trading.

Societe Generale has blamed the rogue trader debacle, announced at the same time as 2 billion euros of losses on US subprime loan market, on unauthorized deals by 31-year-old trader Jerome Kerviel, under investigation on the case.

Kerviel was placed under formal investigation on Monday for breach of trust, using false documents and unauthorized computer access, but judges did not approve the more serious charge of fraud. The prosecution is appealing against the decision to release him from custody.

The trader's lawyer Elisabeth Mayer said her client was "completely crushed by the media view as surrounding the case."

Pooling questions over how the unknown had become a judicial source said Kerviel told prosecutors his losses must have been aware he placed was of billions of euros in risky futures trades.

He had bought futures in shares European indices—the Eurostoxx, the DAX in Frankfurt and the FTSE in London—effectively betting on the future direction of the stock market.

"He insists convinced that they knew about my positions," Kerviel was quoted as saying in leaked records of his questioning at the weekend. "It is impossible to guarantee that kind of profit with small positions."

The trader was holding positions worth about 50 billion euros ($73 billion) when rogue trades were first uncovered ... well in excess of the bank's market value of 35.9 billion euros and its shareholder funds.

According to the prosecution, Societe Generale chief alleged Kerviel covered taxes about risky trades and each time he produced fictitious documents to justify him self.

But Kerviel's lawyers have accused Societe Generale of turning on their client in part of a bid to "create a scapegoat" to cover up wider losses from the US subprime crisis.

Pressure on the bank was compounded by claims that an American member of its board, Robert Day, had made insider remarks about the rogue trader losses when he made two major share sales this month. AFP

SOCIETE GENERALE: Takeover target

WORLDBRIEFS

Corruption trial

NAGAU—A former Macau minister was convicted on Wednesday of taking tens of millions of dollars in kickbacks and sentenced to 27 years in prison, in the biggest corruption trial in the territory's history. Ao Man-long, former secretary for transport and public works in the Chinese gambling hub, was ordered to return 250 million patacas ($31.3 million) to the government, as well as other properties and assets acquired illegally. Macau's Court of Final Appeal ruled. The 54-year-old former civil servant's sentencing a person who embezzled more than $50 million by taking kickbacks for 41 public works projects, including contracts linked to casino construction. AFP

Barge capsizes

LUBUMBASHI, DR CONGO—Thirteen people were killed, and dozens remain missing, after an overloaded barge sank in a river in Africa's Lake Tanganyika overnight on Monday, the maritime inspection service said on Wednesday. The disaster took place about five kilometers from Kalemie port, on the Democratic Republic of Congo side of the lake that is also shared by Tanzania, Burundi and Zambia. "Fifteen bodies have been recovered, including nine children," a maritime inspector in Kalemie told AFP, adding that it was believed that more than 100 people had been on board the vessel. AFP

Tsunami warning

JAKARTA—The Indonesian meteorology agency issued a tsunami warning on Wednesday after an undersea quake of 6.6 in strength on the Richter scale struck off Sumatra island. The US Geological Survey put the quake at 6.3 magnitude and at a depth of 104 km. The epicenter of the quake was 240 km northeast of East Timor's capital city, Dili, Indonesia's agency said. Reuter

Boat collision

SANDAKAN—Fifteen people died and one was missing after two cargo vessels collided near Shanghai on Wednesday, causing one of them to sink, state media reported. The collision occurred in dense coastal darkness near the mouth of the Yangtze River, Xinhua said. Fifteen of the survivors were rescued, the agency reported, offering no other details on the circumstances of the collision. AFP

Bank robbery

ALTAMIRA DE CACERES—Venezuelan police managed drawn on an ambulance used by robbers escaping a bank swoop on Tuesday, arresting all four men and freeing a group of captives trapped in a two-day hostage standoff. The four bank thieves, including a serial the bank in this sleepy central Venezuelan farming town on Monday and they seized dozens of employees and customers when cornered by hundreds of police. Reuter

Kenya crisis talks launched

NAIROBI—KOFI ANNAN launched formal crisis talks between Kenya's president and opposition leader on Tuesday as 32 people died in fresh clashes stoked by the swearing of an opposition lawmaker.

The former UN chief said he hoped the immediate political issues could be resolved within four weeks and gave Kenya one year to reform its election system after a month of chaos in which almost 1,000 people have died, sparked by the disputed re-election of President Mwai Kibaki.

The talks began as police reported 32 new deaths across the country, to boost ethnic clashes and a police crackdown, particularly in strongholds of opposition leader Raila Odinga—who claims he was robbed of the presidency—in western Kenya and the capital's slums.

But tension said in Nairobi: "We are confident that the issues can be resolved within a year and ... that immediate political issues, what we are facing in the country at the moment, can be resolved within four weeks, if not shorter."

The initial political protests have aroused latent ethnic, economic and land disputes, shattering the image and the economy of the once-stable east African nation with some of the most violence since independence in 1963.

More than a quarter of a million people were displaced in initial violence and thousands have since streamed to flee their homes on Tuesday.

Annan said the first priority was "to try to unify the country inside and the country" before tackling the long-term issues and woes.

UN Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the worsening violence was "deeply concerning," while fast-foes, pean leaders urged the lifeless country's leaders to talk to each other "for the good of the Kenyan country." AFP

Bird flu kills Indonesian; virus spreads across Asia

JAKARTA—BIRD FLU KILLED its third victim in as many days in Indonesia and ravaged poultry stocks in Tibet on Wednesday as the virus picked up speed across Asia.

The death of the 32-year-old man raised Indonesia's human toll to 110—accounting for nearly half the worldwide total. The man died in the capital on Tuesday, three days after being hospitalized.

It was not immediately clear how he contracted the H5N1 virus, said Health Ministry official Tara Hayman, though one of his neighbors was known to be a pet poultry trader.

"We are not sure if any of those birds were infected by the H5N1 virus," he said. "We're still investigating."

In southwestern Tibet, a poultry farm was quarantined after an outbreak of the disease killed 1,000 birds, agriculture officials reported on Wednesday. More than 13,000 other poultry were killed to prevent its spread.

Bird flu typically flares during the winter months, and a number of Asian nations have recently experienced fresh outbreaks in poultry. Birds in China to Thailand. Health officials said it was essential that governments step up surveillance to prevent its spread, especially ahead of new world's Lunar New Year, when massive movements of people and poultry are on the move. AP

Iraqi police discover bodies, severed heads

BAQUBA—IRAQI POLICE SAID they found the remains of 19 executed men in the volatile northeastern province of Diyala on Tuesday, including 10 severed heads.

Another two people were killed and around 20 wounded in a series of bomb blasts in Baghdad, while a suicide bomber targeting a US patrol wounded 10 Iraqis to the northern city of Mosul, where five US soldiers were killed on Monday.

The gruesome discoveries in Diyala were made in several areas around the town of Muqdadiyah, 100 kilometres northeast of Baghdad, provincial police official Lt. Col. Ismael al-Jubori said.

He said the victims, all males, had been killed in the past few days.

The nine victims whose heads were found intact had been shot dead, according to Ahmed Fouad, head of the hospital morgue in Baquba. Their identities were unknown.

Several of the severed heads appeared to have been badly chewed.

Diyala province is one of the most dangerous in Iraq and a stronghold of the Iraqi branch of al-Qaeda. Earlier this month, US troops have launched a major operation in the province targeting the jihadists.

The two people killed in Baghdad died from their injuries in hospital after being caught by a bomb blast in the Fadhiliya district that initially wounded three policemen and five passers-by, security officials and a morgue said.

Shortly before, a bomb exploded on nearby Sayidiya Street along the Tigris river in the west of Baghdad as a US army patrol was passing, wounding six civilians and four soldiers, the sources said.

In the Sunni district of Yarmuk in western Baghdad, three civilians were wounded in an explosion and two people were hurt when a mortar round crashed on the eastern neighborhood of Al-Fadhyah. AFP

Republic of the Philippines
City of Cebu
BOX AND GRADE CHARTER
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The WORLD

Edna Guerrero B. Quiroz

US House passes $146-B economic stimulus package

WASHINGTON—THE US HOUSE of Representatives on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved a plan to give the US economy a $146 billion stimulus this year boost through tax rebates and other measures to stave off a possible recession by boosting business and consumer spending.

The plan, which passed by a vote of 380-38 and is backed by President George W. Bush, includes tax rebates of up to $600 for individuals and $1,200 for married couples, plus $300 per child. The legislation also includes tax breaks to encourage business investment in new equipment.

It now goes to the Senate, where Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said it would be taken up quickly. The Nevada Democrat said he expects a number of amendments to be offered to the bill. But backers of the House bill are concerned that demands in the Senate to spend more for roads and other programs will slow down the legislation.

Lawmakers are aiming to get a bill to Bush's desk by mid-month and any changes in the Senate would mean further negotiations with the House and the White House to work out their disagreements.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said the Senate should approve the House-passed version to avoid delays.

"This is not a time to get into some kind of tearing of wills between the two components of leaders. This is a time to show that we can rise above partisanship, do something important, and do it quickly," McConnell said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, and House Republican Leader John Boehner of Ohio, also urged the Senate to accept the House-passed package that the two leaders negotiated with the White House. Reuters

SUBPRIME CRACKDOWN

FBI starts probe of 14 corporations

WASHINGTON—THE FBI HAS opened criminal investigations into 14 corporations as part of a crackdown on improper subprime lending, agency officials said on Tuesday.

FBI officials told reporters the probes involved potential violations, including misrepresentations and insider trading.

They did not identify the companies. But the probes reached across the industry to include developers, subprime lenders, companies that securitized loans and investment banks that hold them, said Ned Norris, head of the FBI's economic crimes unit.

"Currently there are ... 14 investigations, inquiries open right now," he said.

Cases involving individual home sales—most sharply in a crackdown on subprime lending irregularities, officials said.

"We anticipate in the new year that another wave of adjustable rate mortgages will reset and with that we anticipate that the mortgage corporate fraud potential rises to increase," said Sharon Ormsby, head of the FBI's financial crimes section.

The FBI is investigating the companies cases in parallel with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which has opened about three dozen civil investigations into the subprime market collapse, some of the probes overlap, sources familiar said.

Targets of the SEC probe include Swiss bank UBS AG and US investment banks Morgan Stanley Merrill Lynch, Bear Stearns, as well as local names MBIA.

The SEC, which has formed an internal subprime mortgage task force, is looking at how financial firms priced mortgage-based securities and whether they should have told investors earlier about the declining value of those securities.

The US attorney in Brooklyn, New York and the FBI earlier launched a criminal investigation into two mortgage-related hedge funds at Bear Stearns that collapsed during the summer.

There are also state investigations.

The corporate investigations are part of an FBI crackdown on improper subprime lending, which also includes a focus on fraud in mortgage origination.

The agency has about 1,200 active cases, up 46 percent from 2006, with 321 criminal complaints or indictments, officials said.

"Subprime loans are decreasing but ... suspicions of mortgage fraud are increasing," Ormsby said. Reuters

The new Iraqi flag

New flag ratified by presidential council on Tuesday

- Horizontal red, white and black stripes
- "God is Greater" written in Kufic script

AFP 2007/08

New Iraqi flag draws controversy

BAGHDAD—CONTROVERSIAL changes to the Iraqi flag that drop its distinctive three stars and Saddam Hussein's handwritten pledge to God were ratified by the presidential council on Tuesday, a government statement said.

The last was passed by parliament a week ago amid acrimonious exchanges between those who approved the new design because it expunged symbols associated with Saddam and those who believed the standard should not be touched.

The new flag keeps its horizontal red, white and black stripes but drops its three green stars, which came to be associated with Saddam's Baath party.

Before being given new meaning by the Baath party, the stars had represented Arab unity between Iraq, Syria and Egypt.

Instead of the executed dictator's handwritten "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest), the phrase will be printed in green on the central white stripe in the Kufi form of Arabic script. AFP

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■ Kidd powers Nets; Wallace lifts Pistons /A24

Abap head: Tipon can win only by KO

Aiba denies 3rd bantamweight Olympic qualifier report

By Recah Trinidad

BANGKOK—FILIPINO JOAN TIPON MUST go all out for a knockout against Wanapat Pattiyathanee because a "nobody" may have to face him in the third round if the final bell, the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) president said yesterday.

The pronoun doubled on Tipon yesterday after organizers flatly denied a Bangkok Post claim on Tuesday that the boxers included in the bantamweight class, where the last remaining Filipino fighter enters the Thai was in the semifinal round Friday, would automatically earn a spot in the Beijing Olympics.

"That's a hoax," Abap president Manny Lopez said of the Post report that was quoted in this paper yesterday.

He said only the finalists in the bantamweight and other lighter divisions in the current Asian Olympic qualifier here will advance to the Beijing Olympics.

However, in the second and last of the latest qualifying tournaments to Kazakhstan in March, Lopez said, three members, including the two semifinalists in the flyweight, bantamweight and featherweight class, will earn spots in the year's Olympics.

Earlier, Lopez, a member of the Aiba executive committee and secretary general of Aiba Asia, gave the BP marching staff orders not to let the last remaining chance of the Philippines in quality-hosts here slip.

But, while waiting for the start of the featherweight fights yesterday, Lopez no longer looked enthusiastic about Tipon's chances.

"You think Parejano would have won here in 1998 if he did not stop Chatchai banded?" Lopez asked, referring to the WBC flyweight title snagged by the Bataan from the Thai world champion in 10 stoppage.

"Making somebody like Jiang Small knockout ang kalaban (Nobody wins fast if he does not knock out his Pacifier)," he added grimly.

"Not exactly by a knockout, but Tipon needs a wide margin, he must win very, very convincingly," said BP referee Salvador Vidal, who also sat with the panel of judges here.

Although Thailand has scored victories in a homestate decision coupled of the world, there has, so far, been no fraudulent attempt to favor Thai fighters in the current tournament.

ABAP /A 22

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BLIPPO! Bayron muscles after sinking a birdie.

Bayron boosts lead; Jaya up

By Hanong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—BLIPPO! Bayron overcame mistakes all the way to shoot a two-under-par 70 that boosted his lead to two strokes at the halfway mark of the 10th DOLAWAYpress National Amateur Golf Championships at Canlubang Country Golf Club.

"I drove the ball poorly today," Bayron said in Filipino after finishing with six birdies against four bogeys for a 36-hole total of 139.

Despite his driving woes, Bayron still managed to land by three strokes until a three-putt bogey on the 18th allowed Joanel Bahandoy and reigning SP Amateurs champion Anthony Fernando to close to within two.

Bahandoy, the second winner of the trailblazing National Golfers' Open, and Fernando shot identical scores for the second straight day—71s—and kept their tie at 141, one stroke ahead of Mark Fernando, who also had a 71.

Meanwhile, Indonesian ace Lydia Ferina Jaya shot a 73 and took a one-stroke lead at the start of women's play over SP team mates Chelsea Dacoba and Joven Bregeira, Bonnie Jung Rhee Lee and Kandelaw Bumpadid.

Fitting 70s were Crystal Patch Ilarde, Sarah Jane Abalos and Abel Abs Pakor of Malaysia in the division that drew 26 players seeking the title given up by the absent Dorcas Bediona.

Bayron put together an impressive display of controlling throughout the round to wind up with the day's best score at the 6,870-yard par-based layout that showed its teeth and yielded just five under-par scores.

Unheralded Bruce Villafuer also accounted a 71 and bounced back from consecutive 74s like Marvin Lalinga, the former caddie who was a semifinalist in the SP last in Bacolod three years ago, who fired a 72.

"Obviously, I can't play like that (in the final two rounds) and expect to win," Bayron said. "I have to be steady because those behind me can pounce on any mistakes anytime."

The 25-year-old Bahandoy, a native of Zamboanga, had five birdies and four bogeys, while Fernando threw away a brilliant 33 in the front nine with two bogeys costing bonus.

After her opening 77, Ateneo Abalos matched level-72 to be at 149, one behind Teodito Isidoro and Muhammad Faizal of Malaysia, who both carded 73s for 146.

The leading second-round scores:

198—E. Bayron (66-72) 141—J. Bahandoy (71-70), A. Fernando (70-71), M. Fernando (71-70) 146—T. Villafuer (74-72), R. Lalinga (74-72), I. Isidoro (73-73), F. Muhammad (73-73) 147—J. Bahandoy (76-71), A. Fernando (71-76) 148—J. Abalos (77-71), J. Bahandoy (76-72), A. Fernando (77-71), M. Fernando (76-72), R. Lalinga (74-74), T. Villafuer (74-74), E. Bayron (66-82), M. Fernando (71-77

Roach keeps focus on the task at hand

By Roy Luarca

FOR NOW, FREDDIE ROACH'S EYES ARE focused on Manny Pacquiao. Not on De La Hoya.

The two-time Trainer of the Year wants the Filipino ring icon to be at his best when he tangles with Mexican champion Juan Manuel Marquez for the World Boxing Council super featherweight crown on March 15 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

At the same time, Roach disrupts all reports that De La Hoya, whom he trained in a losing fight against Floyd Mayweather Jr last year, has booked him in favor of Floyd Mayweather Sr.

"Because really, no need about it [De La Hoya decision]," Roach told News Hits of mediBOSS.com. "I got Pacquiao getting ready for us big fight so I've got no commitment on that."

Pacquiao has been training earnestly at Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood since Jan. 16 in preparation for Pacquiao-Marquez II clubbed the "Unfinished Business" because their first fight in 2004 ended in a controversial draw.

According to Roach, the De La Hoya camp informed him that they haven't reached a decision as of Monday (Tuesday in Manila).

"So I'm really not worried about it," said Roach, who, however, admitted that he'd be disappointed if the reports turn out to be true.

"I like working with Oscar," said Roach. "I thought we had a good camp together last time and I think it would be better because we got more time to [know each other]."

ROACH

Roach, supervised De la Hoya's preparations for Mayweather Jr. in 90-second, letting his then assistant Justin Fortune to work out with the opponent in Los Angeles.

Roach flew to San Antonio, Texas, to the eve of Pacquiao's fight against Mexican Jorge Solis and then went back to De La Hoya's side after Pacquiao's eighth round stoppage of Solis at the Alamodome on April 14.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao was named the world's best super featherweight by Ten (cell nano in his article titled "The Best of the Best: 8 Division Breakdown that appeared in Ring-side Report "The Heart of Boxing."

Also cited were Vladimir Klitschko (heavyweight), David Haye (cruiserweight), Bernard Hopkins (light heavyweight), Joe Calzaghe (super middleweight), Kelly Pavlik (middleweight), Floyd Mayweather (light middleweight and welterweight), Ricky Hatton (light welterweight), Juan Diaz (lightweight), Chris John (featherweight) and Lionel Vazquez (super bantamweight).

In a related development, a tour package costing P89,000 has been arranged for Filipinos aiming to watch the Pacquiao-Marquez II.

For details, call (632) 485 1600.

A CUT ABOVE THE REST--Gabriel Rasul proves he is head and shoulders above his defenders, exploding for 34 points to lead Xavier past St. Stephen's, 89-53, in Young Lion basketball.

St. Scho five triumphs

PEARL MILLIAM TANK E JUMPER III the final six seconds as St. Scholastica's College upset Philippine Women's University, 78-76, to retain the basketball championship in the fifth season Colleges Sports Association (MCSA) at the Assumption College gym over the weekend.

La Consolacion College Manila tasted a double celebration for the SSC Scions when the Olive Royals nailed the volleyball crown via a hard-earned 25-20, 17-25, 25-22, 20-25 and 15-7 victory.

Reigning champion and host Assumption College rallied for second runner-up honors after winning Mapua College, 25-18, 25-22, 25-20.

The league receives on Sat. 8-10 with the badminton and swimming contests. Table tennis and futsal get their turn on Feb. 17 and 24.

Legendary Shin to share shooting tips

AFTER TORCHING MANY RP SQUADS IN the past with his lost shooting, South Korean legend Shin Dong Pa is coming over to the country to coach Filipinos how he did it.

The legendary Korean star will hold a clinic from Feb. 29 to March 1 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Shin will share the secrets of his success among Filipino coaches in a clinic organized by Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines (BCAP) and supported by Samahang Basketball ng Pilipinas-Basketball Association of the Philippines (SBP-BAP).

"We have the opportunity to see how they train their players, so we feel we can learn a lot from them especially in terms of shooting," said BCAP president Chito Narvasa.

"We can relate to their [Koreans] style. Of shooting's since we have the same physical structure," added Narvasa.

The last time the Koreans had a basketball clinic in the country was in 1996 through the efforts of the SBP.

Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay, recently elected president of BAI and Manny Pangilinan, SBP president and chair of PLDT-Smart, threw their support in the clinic by personally hogging local spotlight.

Shin and Olympian Bo Hee Hyung are set to plane in on Feb. 27. They will be joined by Powerhouse coach Ryan Gregorio, Alaska's Tim Cone, Red Bull's Yeng Guiao and Derrick Pumaren.

RUBY Rizzolo (3rd from left), country rose organizer, will again be in the forefront of the Milo Marathon after signing an agreement with Nestle officials (from left) Marisela Cain Abarca, Dennis Asuncion and Pat Gaw-ang.

Milo Marathon kicks off 32nd season with Batangas City race

THE LONGEST RUNNING FOOTRACE IN the country gets back on the streets as the 32nd National Milo Marathon kicks off with an opening leg in Batangas City this Sunday.

The marathon hopes to draw more than 200,000 participants this year over a total of 28 races culminating with the national finals.

Last year's 24-stage marathon gathered 155,000 runners and national race organizer Ruby Rizzolo promises to see a new record this time, starting in Batangas City where over 5,000 runners are expected to join.

For his part, Nestle AVP and MILO franchise for Sports Pat Gaw-ang is giving his all-out support for this year's races.

The top three finishers in the men's and women's divisions of the 21K run will advance to the 42K national finals slated on Nov. 30 in Metro Manila.

Aside from the 21K elimination race, also on hand in the Batangas City stage are the 5k fun run, the 3K race for kids, the inter-school batch running competition and the touch-and-relay sprint cluster events.

All top 10 finishers in the three racing events will receive trophies, medals and cash prizes amounting to P100,000.

Rizzolo said all participants should be at the starting area not later than 5 a.m. for pre-race briefings and check in. Runners are also advised to wear the shirts given to them for security purposes.

After the Batangas City leg, the second host race held in partnership with Shoemart Fresh Hotel-Manila, Adidas and the Department of Tourism will hold qualifying races in Puerto Princesa City on Feb. 13, Clark Freeport in Pampanga on Feb. 17 and General Santos City on Feb. 24.

Home Guaranty Corporation
Office of the President

NOTICE OF SALE

Please be informed that the following properties of the Home Guaranty Corporation are being offered for public bidding:

Item No.	Property Location	Type	Floor Area	Lot Area	Selling Price	Remarks
	FOR CONSOLIDATION OF TCT:					
	DAIFTE:					
	SAMANIEGO					
1	BLK 1 39 Diplomacy Residential, Dasmariñas, Cavite	RFH	30.00	47.50	1,462,500.00	With Rights to Vacate
2	BLK 1 40 Diplomacy Residential Phase 2, Dasmariñas, Cavite	R-RFH	56.00	57.50	2,254,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
3	BLK 2 20 Diplomacy Residential Phase 2, Dasmariñas, Cavite	RFH	56.00	57.50	2,254,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
4	BLK 2 21 Diplomacy Residential Phase 2, Dasmariñas, Cavite	R-RFH	56.00	70.00	2,408,750.00	With Rights to Vacate
5	BLK 2 22 Diplomacy Residential Phase 2, Dasmariñas, Cavite	R-RFH	47.00	60.00	2,035,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
6	BLK 2 23 Diplomacy Residential, Langkaan, Dasmariñas, Cavite	RFH	30.00	60.00	1,725,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
7	BLK 2 24 Diplomacy Residential, Langkaan, Dasmariñas, Cavite	RFH	30.00	60.00	1,725,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
8	BLK 2 25 Regency Executive Townhomes, Malinta Dasmariñas, Cavite	TH	60.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	Vacant
9	BLK 2 26 Regency Executive Townhomes, Malinta Dasmariñas, Cavite	TH	60.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	Vacant
10	BLK 2 27 Regency Executive Townhomes, Malinta Dasmariñas, Cavite	TH	60.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	Vacant
11	BLK 2 28 Regency Executive Townhomes, Malinta Dasmariñas, Cavite	TH	60.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	Vacant
12	BLK 2 29 Regency Executive Townhomes, Malinta Dasmariñas, Cavite	TH	60.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
13	BLK 2 30 Regency Executive Townhomes, Malinta Dasmariñas, Cavite	TH	60.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
14	BLK 2 31 Kimberly Village, Salawag, Dasmariñas, Cavite	RFH	30.00	60.00	1,725,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
	MILO					
15	BLK 1 1 Magalia Country Estate, P. Tuazon, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	60.00	1,920,000.00	Vacant
16	BLK 1 2 La Fuente Homes, Imus, Cavite	RFH	30.00	108.00	2,415,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
17	BLK 1 3 Magalia Country, P. Tuazon, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	60.00	1,920,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
18	BLK 1 4 Magalia Country, P. Tuazon, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	60.00	1,920,000.00	Vacant
19	BLK 1 5 Magalia West Subdivision, Buzzaglia, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	77.00	2,457,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
20	BLK 1 6 Magalia West Subdivision, Buzzaglia, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	77.00	2,457,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
21	BLK 1 7 Magalia West Subdivision, Buzzaglia, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	84.00	2,512,000.00	Vacant
22	BLK 1 8 Magalia West Subdivision, Buzzaglia, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	84.00	2,512,000.00	Vacant
23	BLK 1 9 Magalia West Subdivision, Buzzaglia, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	77.00	2,457,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
24	BLK 1 10 Magalia West Subdivision, Buzzaglia, Imus, Cavite	RFH	64.00	84.00	2,512,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
25	BLK 1 11 Magalia Homes P.C., Buzzaglia St, Imus, Cavite	RFH	30.00	96.00	2,415,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
26	BLK 2 1 Alfonso Village, Alapan 1, Imus, Cavite	TH	30.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	Vacant
27	BLK 2 2 Alfonso Village, Alapan 1, Imus, Cavite	TH	30.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	Vacant
28	BLK 2 3 Alfonso Village, Alapan, Imus, Cavite	TH	30.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
29	BLK 2 4 Alfonso Village, Alapan, Imus, Cavite	TH	30.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
30	BLK 2 5 Alfonso Village, Anabu, Imus, Cavite	TH	30.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
31	BLK 2 6 Alfonso Village, Anabu, Imus, Cavite	TH	30.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	With Rights to Vacate
32	BLK 2 7 Alfonso Village, Anabu, Imus, Cavite	TH	30.00	60.00	1,950,000.00	With Rights to Vacate

SPORTS

Wallace lifts Pistons; Kidd powers Nets

INDIANA—RASHEED WALLACE EARNED THE PLAUDITS WITH 24 points and 10 rebounds that helped Detroit beat the Indiana Pacers, 110-104, on Tuesday evening (the Pistons their third win in a row.

"He's one of the premiere big men in the NBA and doesn't get the recognition he deserves," Indiana coach Jim O'Brien said of Wallace.

"I think he is one of the top three big men in the East. He is very difficult to defend."

Tayshaun Prince scored 17 points and Chauncey Billups 11 for the Pistons, who improved their season's record to 32-13, second only to the Boston Celtics (35-8) in the Eastern Conference.

Mike Dunleavy scored 25 points for the Pacers, who were playing without the injured Jermaine O'Neal and Jamaal Tinsley.

"They made some really big defensive stops and made big shots down the stretch," said O'Brien.

"They did what they do at the end of the game."

In East Rutherford, New Jersey—Jason Kidd scored all seven of his nine points in the final 5:42 and added 11 assists as the New Jersey Nets snapped a nine-game losing streak with an 87-86 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Tuesday.

Ignoring the distractions Kidd created a day earlier with his comments encouraging a trade, the Nets held the Bucks to 37.5 percent shooting and avoided their first double-digit skid since dropping their first 11 games of the 1999-2000 season.

Richard Jefferson scored 20 points and Vince Carter had 16 points and matched a season-high with 12 rebounds for the Nets. Ronjun Vasilitan had 14 points.

Royal Ivey scored 19 points for the Bucks, who were without leading scorer Michael Redd for the second straight game because of a left knee strain that will also keep him out of Wednesday's game at Philadelphia.

In Washington, Anthony Haslem had 19 points and eight rebounds in only his second start of the season, and Antawn Jamison finished with 30 points and 20 rebounds to lead Washington to a 106-104 overtime victory over Toronto.

Both teams led the way with 37 points and 12 boards for the Raptors. Anthony Parker's three-pointer rushed into the net as the regulation buzzer sounded, forcing the extra period.

In Miami, Louis Poire scored a career-high 35 points with 11 rebounds. Nagee Bonds had a career-high with 23 points, and Tony Allen scored 20 points with six assists to lead the NBA-best Bobcats to an overwhelming 117-87 rout of the struggling Miami Heat.

The Celtics played without Kevin Garnett. Informed abdominal muscles and Ray Allen (flu), and the third member of their star trio, Paul Pierce, was scratched for rest of the game.

Mark Blount scored 20 points for Miami.

In other games, the Seattle SuperSonics ended their team-record 14-game losing streak with an 89-85 home win over the San Antonio Spurs as rookie Kevin Durant scored 20 points and sank the winning basket.

Sta Ming had 26 points and grabbed 20 rebounds to power the Houston Rockets to a 111-107 home win over the Golden State Warriors, 46-67.

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS (from wire & staff): WASHINGTON 106 TORONTO 104 (OT): Jamison 30, Haslem 19, Arenas 17, Butler 16, Blount 10, Stevenson 10, Crawford 4, Thomas 0, Songaila 0, Ukic 0, Nesterovic 0, Bibby 0, Williams 0, Ellis 0, Kapono 0, Ilgauskas 0, Gooden 0, Daniels 0, Hughes

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BUSINESS
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NASA KITA!
ANG SWERTE MO!
Pick 6 Lotto

Gov't raises $500M from bond flotation

Global issue more than 8 times oversubscribed

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT raised $500 million yesterday from its latest global bond float, an issue that was more than eight times oversubscribed and generated keen interest among offshore investors.

"With the issuance, the Philippine government satisfies the commercial external funding requirements for 2008," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a statement.

Industry players said the bond issue generated $4.6 billion in total tenders, but Dalisdis was keep the government to accept more than the $500 million slated to its foreign commercial borrowing program for 2008.

The dollar-denominated bonds were priced at an equivalent of 220.5 basis points over comparable US treasuries. The latest bond offer was a reopening of an earlier $1 billion bond sale maturing in 2032.

The Department of Finance reported that 44 percent of the $500 million in bonds were sold to investors from Asia, 27 percent to those in Europe and 29 percent to those in the United States.

Deutsche Bank and Deutsche bank served as lead managers and book-runners for the bond sale.

"We are pleased to have completed our international funding objectives despite the volatile market conditions," Finance Undersecretary and Acting National Treasurer Roberto Tan said in the same statement.

The oversubscription of the bond offer was driven largely by concerns over the US subprime market crisis.

The DOF said borrowing the entire $500 million early in the year and in one tranche was a wise move given predictions that the subprime market woes would worsen in the months ahead.

While some leading institutions already reported liquidity problems due to defaults by borrowers from the subprime market, more banks are expected to report losses over their lending to the same market.

Teves earlier said the recent move of Moody's Investors Service to raise its outlook on the Philippines from "stable" to "positive" also made the timing of the borrowing appropriate. The improved outlook helped boost interest in Philippine bonds, he said.

A country assigned a "positive" outlook may expect an upgrade in its credit rating within the short term. The Philippines' rating with Moody's, which cited the country's improving fiscal condition as reason for the improved outlook, current-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE B2)

LINGERING FINANCIAL TURBULENCE

IMF warns of sharper global slowdown

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND yesterday warned of a sharper-than-expected global economic slowdown this year due to the lingering financial turbulence caused by the US subprime crisis.

Developing Asia was seen to remain resilient on the back of the robust growth in China and India, but the Fund also warned of risks in emerging markets, which are dependent on capital inflows.

In a latest update in its world economic outlook and global financial stability report, the Washington-based multilateral institution projected global growth to decelerate from 4.9 percent in 2007 to 4.1 percent in 2008, a markdown of 0.3 percentage point versus its assessment three months ago.

"Recent data suggest that global growth slowed markedly in the final quarter of 2007 in the face of significant headwinds from the financial sector, following a stronger-than-expected third quarter. Financial market stress originating in the US subprime sector...and associated losses on bank balance sheets—have intensified, while the recent steep sell-off in global equity markets indicated rising uncertainty, the IMF said.

The IMF projected a slower growth of 1.1 percent in the US, 1.6 percent in most of Europe and 1.5 percent in Japan this year, sending down earlier expectations.

"Despite some slowing of export growth, emerging market and developing economies have thus far continued to expand strongly, led by China and India," the IMF said.

"These economies have benefited from the strong momentum of domestic demand, more

(SEE WORLD B2)

Gov't raises $500M ...

From page B1

ly stands four notches below investment grade.

The latest international bond offer followed the government's $1 billion bond float in January last year.

The $500 million is part of the government's total foreign borrowing requirement of $2 billion for this year. The bigger share of $1.5 billion will be borrowed from multilateral lending institutions, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

The $2 billion will represent 20 percent of the government's total borrowings programmed for 2008. The government intends to borrow 75 percent of its requirement from the local markets.

Mystery of the mining loan

MYSTERY SURROUNDS THE ORAL BIDvance by the Singapore office of Deutsche Bank and the local mining company called Platinum Group Metals Corp.

Last October, Deutsche Singapore gave Platinum Metals a loan of $16 million, which—even with the shrinking dollar—should still be more than P1.4 billion.

It is now the talk of mining town, and word has it that Platinum Metals has a backer at the Palace, indeed sweetly as millisecond lady layes.

The $40-million loan should go to the Platinum Metals' project to build a 6-ounce/ton smelting plant in Mindanao.

Deutsche source on financial circles about the ability of Platinum Metals to get enough added ore supply for the smelting plant.

It seems Platinum Metals lost a big nickel mining rights in Palawan even before Deutsche Singapore gave the loan.

If this did take the bar, this country may again suffer a big black eye before the world of finance.

Of course, you can only expect Deutsche Bank to do something about the Platinum Metal case.

And it's really an old boy's club out there in international banking.

That Platinum needs to figure prominently in the Platinum Metals smelting project, which financiers like Deutsche Singapore surely considered.

One is the loan guarantee of Philippine Export Import Credit Agency amounting to P500 million given to the mining firm in April 2007, in what provenance figures in the mining sector believed to be a last-minute approval.

Hope, that's another agency under the Department of Finance.

The finance department is the same one that's handling the controversy-laden lease of the Philippine government's prime property in Tokyo, Japan.

Our contacts at the Department of Foreign Affairs wonder why one ranking official of DOF was often seen in Tokyo during the negotiations on the lease.

And nobody in the Tokyo embassy of the Philippines was informed about his trip to that city? Hmmm...

Anyway, the last approval of the Philexim guarantee to Platinum Metals were around lows as the work of the long arms of the Malacañang official and that lady lawyer.

* * *

BREAKTIME

Contrado R. Bansil III

THE OTHER crucial factor in the smelting project is an operating agreement between Platinum Metals and a company called Oriental Peninsula Resources Group.

The latter just did a successful IPO last month, apparently on the strength of its thousand hectares of mining claims in Palawan.

But Oriental Peninsula also disclosed in its IPO that the government already cancelled the "operating agreement" that was installed about by Platinum Metals in Philexim and, possibly, Deutsche Singapore.

That next Philexim for-cover, and its oil-cash quickly withdraw the P500-million guarantee to Platinum Metals.

It turned out that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources already cancelled the same "operating agreement" because of Platinum Metals' violation of mining rules.

For instance, the rules say that small-scale miners are allowed an extraction rate of only 50,000 tons a year.

According to our DENR sources, Platinum Metals extracted about a million tons in just one year.

* * *

DENR Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Lito Atienza seems to be watching the case.

He said it could affect the entire mining industry, which is supposed to be the administration's lead sector for our economic resurgence.

Here, according to Atienza, Platinum Metals might have disclosed that the operating agreement was "forged" by Philexim.

Still, the company did not say that the DENR actually canceled it during the mist of today's Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes, who was DENR boss at that time.

* * *

ACCORDING to a press statement purportedly coming from the office, Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza welcomed the Senate investigation on the embarrassing downgrading of the Philippines in the aviation rating of the US Federal Aviation Authority.

Everybody seems to enjoy congressional inquiries nowadays, is that it?

Anyway, I found that noble personnel of the government agency in the center of the SNA storm, the Air Transport Office (ATO), on preparing to testify in the Senate investigation.

Word has it that they intend to talk about a lot of strange practices at the ATO.

Anyway, in the many words, the press statement Mendoza's office indicated that the legislature also had lapses that led to the FAA downgrading of the country.

Congress still has to pass a modern law on aviation, for instance.

Still, the lack of modern legislation on aviation was not just for the lawmakers, he said.

Mendoza said, in effect, the Philippines did not meet international standards. The glaring lack of instances low was just one of them.

For instance, the administration regulations of the ATO did not meet international standards, simply because ATO stopped issuing them since more than five years ago.

And there were also achievements to date, mind you. This did not need Congress to be done.

Also, according to the FAA, the ATO did not have qualified technical personnel to inspect the "air-worthiness" of the aircraft of carriers.

Gosh, the ATO does not even have a training program for its personnel to become qualified technically.

Did Mendoza know that to test the licensed commercial pilots of foreign airlines, for instance, the ATO used to borrow "check pilots" from the Philippine Airlines?

Did he know that pilots of Cebu Pacific can get the license from ATO to fly here, even if they do not speak English, which is a requirement for the freaking license?

Alright, as in terms of instrument inconsistencies, the DOTC already invested almost P200-million to rehabilitate the flight radars in Tagaytay "for know—that huge circular contraption at the road leading to the famous tourists's garden restaurant.

The radar should become operational again this July.

There is only one minor problem. The ATO does have the facilities to process the data coming from the radar.

Let me see, and as ATO will have that working radar, but it still cannot read what's going on more friendly about to be operandidate.

What good is that, really now, hon?

From page B1

IMF warns of sharper global slowdown

dampened macroeconomic policy frameworks, and for commodity exporters, from high food and energy prices as well," it added.

Growth in emerging market and developing economies was also expected to ease, moderating to 6.5 percent this year from 7.8 percent in 2007. In China, growth was perceived to deteriorate to 10 percent from 11.9 percent, which the IMF said should help alleviate overheating concerns.

"The overall balance of risks to the global growth outlook is still tilted to the downside. The main risk to the outlook for global growth is that the ongoing turmoil in financial markets would further reduce domestic demand by the advanced economies and create more significant spillovers into emerging market and developing economies," the IMF said.

The crisis in the US was caused by rising housing mortgage delinquency among subprime borrowers or those with blemished credit history and little equity. Big global banks were forced to write off billions of dollars in losses after investing in structured instruments that contained those subprime assessments as underlying assets.

In the United States, the Federal Reserve has been cutting interest rates in response to increasing downside risks.

In its separate report on global financial stability, the IMF noted that emerging markets had been resilient so far, but were facing challenges ahead.

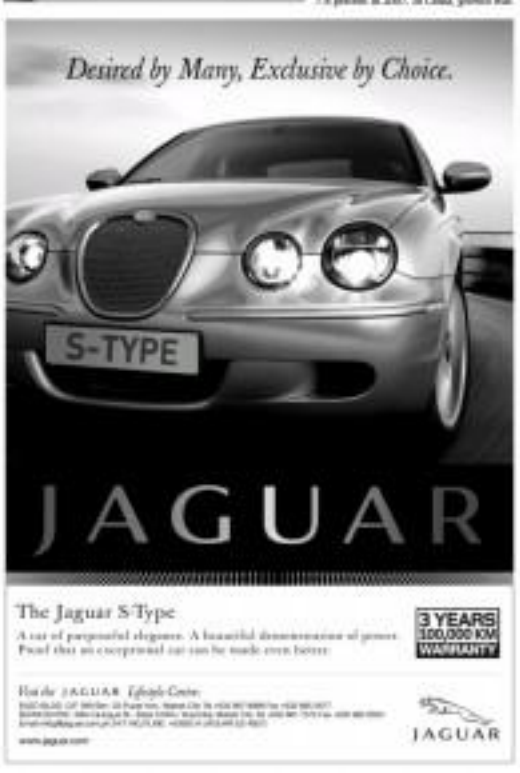
Emerging market equities have outperformed mature equity markets, but prices in some markets have declined steeply since the start of the year as expectations that the US economy may slow more rapidly.

"Importantly, the episode is not yet over and today's balance cannot therefore be considered final," the IMF said.

Over the short term, the IMF said countries need to rebuild confidence and the financial soundness of institutions and then ease ongoing liquidity tensions, allowing interbank markets to function normally again and intermediation to continue.

Credit rating agencies were urged to improve their methodologies, provide differentiated ratings and give more information about the sensitivity of their ratings to the underlying assumptions.

"The line between regulated and unregulated institutions is always a complex issue, but it has become evident that unregulated (or lightly regulated) financial institutions that originate mortgages and construct credit products similar to those originated by regulated financial institutions should be subject to similar disclosures and consumer protection requirements," the IMF said.



Lend more to SMEs, BSP urges banks

By Dorris C. Dorrian

"DIE BANKERS (SENTRAL NG) Pilipinas yesterday urged bankers to help solve the country's "problem of plenty"—referring to the cash-rich financial system—by lending more to micro, small and medium enterprises.

In a keynote speech delivered before the Bank Marketing Association of the Philippines (BMAP), BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said that by doing so, the economy would no longer have a "problem of plenty" but instead maximize "a pot of plenty for the many."

A lot of cash is flowing into the banking system due to the influx of dollars, mostly from overseas Filipino workers subscribing to about $11 billion a month in remittances.

That has caused the peso to appreciate dramatically to the chagrin of OFWs who remit in dollars and exporters whose products are now more expensive in the world market.

Tetangco then called on the banks to "help ensure that we improve our economy by actually promoting and extending credit."

He noted that one of the BSP's priorities was to broaden access of SMEs and the microfinance sector to credit.

Tetangco also requested BMAP headed by new president Miguel Villa-real of Philippine Veterans Bank, to mount a more visible campaign to disclosure requirements on ATM (automated teller machine) fees.

"My other request is for BMAP to initiate the pruning of the correct details of their 'high level' officers who can receive customer feedback (but are often overlooked at the branch level," Tetangco said.

He also urged banks to remain cautious.

Tetangco explained that while the country achieved a significant "breakthrough" in the economy, citing the positive credit rating outlook recently given by credit watchdog Moody's, challenges remain, particularly the lingering effects of the subprime mortgage crisis and an economic slowdown in the United States.

GOCCs to prepay $2.4B in debt

By Michelle F. Remo

GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED corporations will prepay an estimated $2.4 billion in combined debt this year, a move finance officials said was prudent in the peso was expected to remain strong.

Using an exchange rate of P41 to $1, the $2.4 billion represents 7 percent of the combined P1.2832 trillion that GOCCs owed creditors as of March last year, based on latest data from the Department of Finance.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said state-run power firms were included in the list of GOCCs wanting to prepay debts this year to put their cash to good use.

"From proceeds of power privatization, (state-run power firms) are looking at prepaying debt," Teves said yesterday in a speech delivered in a forum organized by Bloomberg.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), the state-run firm overseeing the government's power assets, last year generated $3.91 billion from the auction of the 25-year concession of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

Finance officials said prepayments of US-dollar-denominated debts, which the national government also intends to do this year, was wise because of the appreciation of the peso against the greenback.

A strong peso makes debt denominated in foreign currencies cheaper in local-currency terms.

The peso, which broke into the 41-to-a-dollar territory last year to reach its highest level in seven-and-a-half years, is seen to further strengthen this year.

Some analysts projected that it could even break into the 37-to-a-dollar level.

The sharp rise of the peso, regarded as the strongest performing currency in Southeast Asia last year, was partly credited to the increase in foreign portfolio investments and remittances sent by overseas Filipino workers to their families.

The DOF also said state-owned firms have the flexibility to pay maturing debts in advance because of their improved budget positions.

GOCCs recorded a combined budget surplus of P39.466 billion in January to September last year.

The surplus came following a directive from the national government for GOCCs to improve their financial performance, in a bid to wean them away from subsidies.

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PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

SINCE 1964

2008 Officers

JUST WHEN IS GLOBALIZATION FOR dunces, in not a new phenomenon. Throughout history adventurers, generals, merchants, marketing-minded financiers and capitalists have constructed an ever-expanding and changing global economic order. It is the global integration of many formerly national economies into one global economy, aiming for free trade and free capital mobility, but also easy or uncontrolled migration. It is the effective creation of national boundaries for economic purposes.

Globalization is fashionable to be a symbol. Compelled by previous terrorist attacks on America, associated conflict in the Middle East and nervousness about Korea's nuclear capabilities, ordinary people are supporting and promoting their country's stand on them and other seemingly interrelated problems. Nationalism is not the rise and the symbolical cluster is the enemy flag. Thus, the resurgence of globalism and anti-globalism with their respective psychological differences.

Globalization of companies plays a large role in the globalization of economies. For globalizing investors, this suggests that attracting foreign affiliates of global corporations may be a key to greater participation in the global economy. Global acquisitions and alliances are stronger than ever. Many factors are driving this cross-border activity, but corporations are moving away from diversification and state-owned and strategic mass market driven approach.

Multinational or global marketing is growing in importance as consumers' tastes and preferences in different countries become more similar. Companies operate in different countries but sometimes face considerable differences in language, customs, currencies, trade barriers and governmental regulations. World trade may help a nation's economy grow but may also lead to undesirable cultural change and trade deficits.

Thus, it is within this context that PMA President has taken this year's thematic approach towards 'Forging Global Marketing Partnerships.' Philippines, here he hasn't benefited in the global exchange of capital, products and expertise? For globalization positively or adversely affected our respective economies? Even if we have to consider of establishing a global presence, we must be prepared to compete successfully with those who do. We may not know when it takes to succeed in both home front and international marketing arena? PMAers, shall we all rise and respond to the global challenge?

Directors

FORGING GLOBAL MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

MARKET GREETINGS TO the officers and members of the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) on the occasion of your 44th anniversary and installation ceremonies.

For the past seven years, my administration has worked hard to fulfill our dream of a strong Philippine Republic and we are poised to realize that dream. Business confidence is high. Our economy has rebounded with an unprecedented 7 percent growth, the peso has strengthened beyond expectations, foreign investments are on the rise, tourism is increasing, and the Philippine stock market is among the most active in the region.

By the grace of God and through sheer Filipino ingenuity, the Philippines is now among the top business process outsourcing destinations in the world. We have exported the power and resources of our people overseas. And for the first time in 19 years, we have displayed a strong fiscal independence.

Certainly all these achievements would not have been possible without the active support and participation of the private sector like the Philippine Marketing Association. Thus, it is only fitting that I sincerely wish you all the best in this milestone in your history.

Your choice of theme for this year's gathering, 'Forging Global Marketing Partnerships' also shows your firm commitment to help promote the Philippines as a competitive player in the global market. I am certain that the attainment of your noble will advance our marketing industry and further improve our economy.

Again, happy anniversary and congratulations to your new set of officers and directors.

Mabuhay!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Chowking
Lunch & Dinner Sets
na babaliktan...

Committee

The ultimate challenge: 2008 World Marketing Conference

ECHANGE - HOW DO WE ADOPT? DESpite to the rapid global changes brought about by technological innovation, liberalization of markets and business development to seize the vast opportunities that a global economy can offer to our marketing practitioners and entrepreneurs?

Indeed, now lies in our hands the responsibility to host the 2008 WMC in our homeland. This conference should be able to unleash opportunities for possible global integration and global competitiveness for our Filipino businesses.

Talk about latest trends in global marketing. As we embrace developments brought about by technological innovations and a more liberal trading system, the need to educate ourselves with these advancements now becomes a primordial concern. And this forthcoming event should serve as a good venue for us to gather industry experts and explore some of the latest global marketing trends.

2008 WMC should underscore the importance of marketing in business enterprises to sustain economic growth and instill in us greater social responsibility so that we may partake a greater role in nation building. This conference should provide our members and other target participants an invaluable service. With utmost preparations and foresight, we can succeed in conquering a global market and we can learn from their past experience and expertise. The crew we are can profit from a healthy exchange of ideas from our foreign counterparts. PMA must be in a position to adopt a commendable, outward-looking perspective backed up by the innate talents, strengths and advantages of Filipino manpower, products and services! Participants are envisioned to contribute to a multi-sectoral approach to promote a solid foundation for the country's industrialization with the end goal of ensuring new wealth and prosperity to meet global standards.

The Philippines, according to latest economic assessments, is well on track towards fiscal stability. The buoyant growth in exports, main engines, favorable external and domestic environments, appreciation of a number of Asian currencies, a growth index of 7.1 percent from 5.3 percent a year ago, OFW remittances higher than capital inflows (average of 1.065 billion monthly remittances are contributory factors to this growth momentum).

Stronger peso and other factors will definitely enhance our business environs and offer greater challenges to our marketers both in the domestic and global basis.

How prepared are we and our foreign counterparts in testing these global opportunities in terms of conflict within and outside each nations borders?

On the other hand PMA is tasked to provide the venue by organizing and yearmost prestigious events in the annals of PMAs colorful history.

Together, we should overcome! Together, we shall beat the odds! Together, we will have this extra challenge! Together, we will make a difference in the global community!

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CREBA Board of Directors & Officers, 2008

BPI '07 profit hits ₱10B

Growth fueled by non-core business

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS SAID its net profit in 2007 hit the ₱10-billion mark, up by 11 percent from year-ago level.

BPI, the country's third largest bank, said growth came largely from non-core businesses.

It said that while net interest income was relatively flat, non-interest income—or earnings from the sale of foreclosed assets, commissions from insurance subsidiaries, rental income and foreign exchange and securities trading gains—rose by 26 percent.

BPI's 2007 net income translated to a return on equity of 18.1 percent and a return on assets of 1.7 percent. In 2006, BPI posted ₱9 billion in net profit.

While gross lending expanded by 11 percent, net interest income was flat due to narrowing spreads as the average 91-day treasury bill rate, used by banks as benchmark in pricing loans, shed 113 basis points in 2007.

"Corporate loans accelerated by 9 percent, helped by the improved appetite for term loans from top corporations and the 20-percent improvement in SME (small and medium enterprises) lending," BPI reported.

Consumer loans remained the fastest growing portfolio during the year posting growth of 17 percent. Retail mortgages expanded by 24 percent; auto loans, 14 percent and credit card receivables, 13 percent.

The bank's nonperforming loans declined to only 3.3 percent of the total loan portfolio from about 4 percent a year ago.

Total cash dividends declared by the bank amounted to ₱2.30/per share or 3-cash yield of 4.6 percent, translating to a 46% dividend payout ratio of 76 percent of the net income posted last year.

"BPI is optimistic on the country's economic prospects. Although 2008 may be more challenging, the economy is expected to stay on course on the strength of a resilient domestic demand," the bank said.

"For its part, the bank intends to focus on lending, aiming to raise loan growth's to 12 percent for the year, after an 11-percent rise in 2007 and six years of single-digit average lending growth."

GIC buys 9% of Pepsi

GOVERNMENT OF Singapore Investment Corp. (GIC), a sovereign fund that manages Singapore's foreign reserves, bought some 9.3 percent of Pepsi-Cola Products Philippines Inc., market sources said.

Pepsi will list on the Philippine Stock Exchange on Friday.

GIC is a global investment company established in 1981 to manage Singapore's foreign reserves. With a network of eight offices in key financial capitals around the world, GIC invests internationally in equities, fixed income, foreign exchange, commodities, money markets, alternative investments, real estate projects and private equity.

It manages more than $100 billion in funds, ranking it one of the world's largest fund management firms.

Pepsi under its initial public offer price at ₱5.50, the lower end of its price range of ₱5.50-₱6.50, which will raise for the company up to ₱4 billion.

Lead underwriter BDO Capital & Investment Corp. president Eduardo Francisco said that at this price, he was optimistic. Total investors would pick up the stock.

The company earlier borrowed in order range to between ₱3.50 and ₱4.50 from ₱6.04.

Pepsi said it would use about ₱1.28 billion of the proceeds from the offering of new shares in finance capital expenditures in 2008 and 2009. The company intends to put up more nonalcoholic and beverage production facilities, construct soft drinks production capacity of certain plants and expand its PET production capacity during the period.

Elizabeth C. Lacson

INTEGREON president and CEO Liam Brown signs the inaugural matter of Integreon Managed Solutions (Philippines) as Ayala Corp. chair and CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II (left) and Live In CEO Fred Ayala (center) look on. ARVIN MORA

Integreon opens Makati office

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

AMERICAN BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING firm Integreon Managed Solutions, a majority-owned firm of the Ayala Group's BPO investment vehicle Live! Solutions Inc., opened yesterday a 100-seat office in Makati City.

Integreon will set up an office for 300 seats (equivalent to 300 employees) on the 9th floor of 6750 Building along Ayala Avenue in Makati. Integreon Philippines country manager Ruth Tolentino said.

Tolentino said this early, Integreon was already looking for a second site for another office of 200 to 250 seats. The sites being considered are in Metro Manila and Cebu.

"We're very excited about the way the global outsourcing business is beginning to mature up and well in, Ayala Corp., would like to participate in the fast-growing industry. We have started to participate and we have acquired stakes in global companies that are making a difference," Ayala Corp. chair and chief executive officer Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II said yesterday.

In October 2006, Live! acquired a majority stake in Integreon, a "23-based decision process and knowledge process outsourcing company with delivery centers in the United States, United Kingdom and India.

Ayala's Live! has invested some $122 million in the BPO sector since 2006, including its acquisition of stakes in three BPO leaders—eTelecare Global Solutions, Affinity Express and Integreon.

Zobel said he was upbeat on the BPO sector despite concerns about the impact on the business of US economic slowdown.

"The way I look at the business, it's from a long-term perspective. There are business cycles in the world in all areas. If a recession take place then there will be a slowdown in activity but we are looking here at the global trend over the long-term which we think is not going to slow down," Zobel said.

"The whole push toward increasing productivity globally we believe, is a trend that will continue to have many institutions in the developed environment to seek ways of raising their productivity bringing down their cost and that naturally brings into our sphere of influence many services where we are traditionally strong at," Zobel said.

Robinsons Land income jumps 42%

ROBINSONS LAND CORP., THE property arm of the Gokongwei group of companies, yesterday said its net income grew 42 percent to ₱2.65 billion in fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2007, from ₱1.72 billion in the previous year.

In a financial disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, RLC said it posted gross revenue of ₱8.09 billion for fiscal year 2007, up by 29 percent from ₱6.37 billion.

RLC president and CEO Frederick D. Go, said: "All business units performed remarkably well. Our strategy to build our brands and be responsive to market demands made our performance possible."

RLC's commercial centers division—which develops, leases and manages shopping malls...com. It listed ₱3.54 billion or 39 percent of the company's total revenue.

The company has 19 shopping malls, of which six are in Metro Manila. Five of the malls house call centers and business process outsourcing firms.

RLC's high rise residential buildings division, which develops office buildings for lease and middle-income to upscale residential developments, accounted for 40 percent or ₱3.04 billion of RLC's gross revenue.

The housing and land development division posted ₱715.8 million in revenue, up by 39 percent from ₱514.9 million in the previous year.

The hotels division posted gross revenue of ₱1.11 billion, up by 22 percent from ₱987.3 million in the previous year. Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

Currencies

January 30, 2008 Country	Unit	Cash Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.0000	1.000000	40.2000
Japan	Yen	0.0000	0.008630	0.3469
United Kingdom	Pound	1.9904	1.987100	80.0851
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.0000	0.128500	5.1657
Switzerland	Franc	0.0000	0.881000	35.4162
Canada	Dollar	0.0000	0.992000	39.8784
Singapore	Dollar	0.0000	0.700000	28.1400
Australia	Dollar	0.0000	0.880000	35.3760
Bahrain	Dinar	0.0000	2.654000	106.6908
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.0000	0.266700	10.7207
Brunei	Dollar	0.0000	0.700000	28.1400
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0000	0.000100	0.0040
Thailand	Baht	0.0000	0.030000	1.2060
UAE	Dirham	0.0000	0.272300	10.9495
China	Yuan	0.0000	0.138000	5.5476
Kuwait	Dinar	0.0000	3.503000	140.8506
Qatar	Riyal	0.0000	0.274700	11.0459
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.0000	0.277000	11.1354
Bahrain Islamic	Dinar	0.0000	2.654000	106.6908
Oman	Rial	0.0000	2.600000	104.5200
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.0000	0.030000	1.2060

Source: Bankers Trust, closing prices as of 3:00 p.m. Jan. 29, 2008
Philippine dollar-to-peso exchange rate as of Jan. 29, 2008

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Peso weakens, waits Fed move

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY CLOSED LOWER for eight-year highs but closed weaker at 40.72 against the US dollar as regional currency markets wait for the US Federal Reserve's next move.

The US Federal Reserve is scheduled to meet Wednesday night (Manila time) and is expected to adjust rates again following the hefty 75-basis point interest rate cut last week.

Ahead of the Fed's regular meeting, and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' own policy-rate setting today, the peso surged to 40.515 in early morning trade but closed at 40.71 or near the day's low of 40.78.

The local currency thus shed 7 centavos from the two-week high of 40.65 posted last Tuesday.

Regional currency markets are waiting to see if the US Federal Reserve will announce another 50-basis point cut in its benchmark interest rate as many analysts expect.

The BSP, for its part, is not keen on matching the magnitude of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate cuts.

But analysts say it was likely that the BSP would cut its overnight borrowing rate by 50 basis points at today's meeting.

Ahead of the Monetary Board's policy-setting, BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo cited factors that will affect the domestic inflation outlook.

"If the inflation outlook is okay, then you have the flexibility to reduce the rates. As usual, those are the things we look at. We continue to monitor developments," Guinigundo said in a briefing.

The government wants to keep inflation this year within 5-5 percent and between 2.5 percent and 4.5 percent for 2009.

Western Union, Smart, Globe strike text deal

By Riza T. Olchondra

WESTERN UNION HAS JOINED FORCES with Smart Communications Inc. (Smart) and Globe Telecom Inc. subsidiary G. Xchange Inc. to allow overseas Filipino workers to send remittances using the text messaging service.

Western Union's agreements with Smart and Globe are part of the pilot program of Western Union and the GSM Association, a global trade association representing over 760 GSM mobile phone operators, to develop cross-border mobile money transfer services.

Smart's Smart Money system and Globe's G-Cash service both serve as so-called electronic wallets that allow users to send and receive cash and make payments, including bill payments, donations and online purchases through text messaging.

Smart ended 2007 with more than 30 million subscribers, seven million of whom used the Smart Money system.

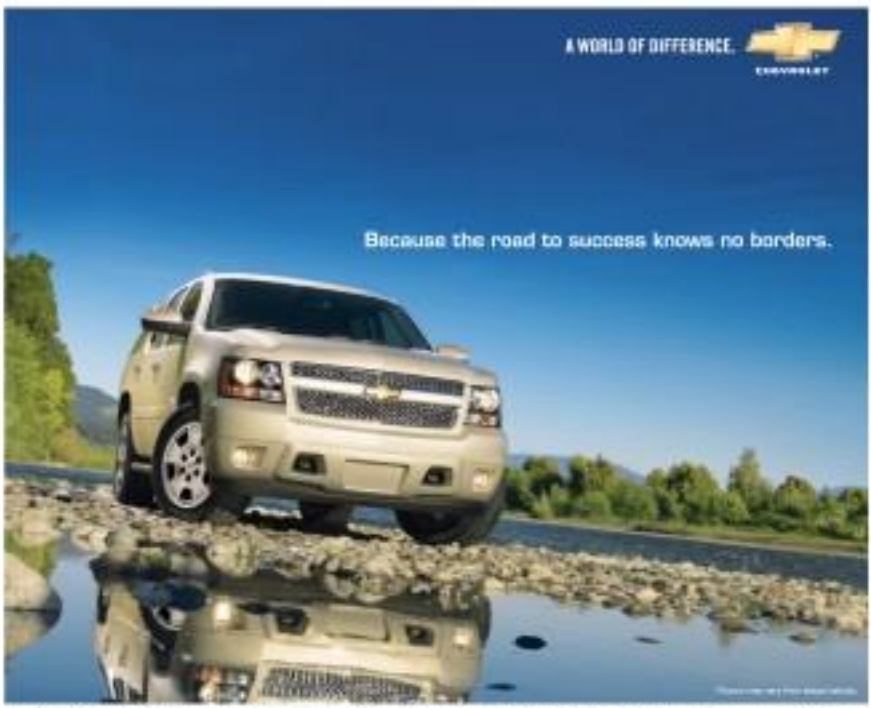
Globe, on the other hand, registered more than 19 million subscribers by end-September 2007 and close to 500,000 active G-Cash users.

Western Union, together with its affiliates Orlandi Valdez and Vigo, maintains the industry's largest global money transfer agent network with more than 220,000 locations in over 200 countries and territories.

And the remittance company's mobile money players is in a better position to serve immigrants, the main users of remittance services.

There are about 200 million immigrants worldwide or about 3 percent of the world's population. Of the total, about eight million are overseas Filipino workers.

According to the latest World Bank data, the Philippines is the fourth-largest receiver of remittances with $17 billion sent last year.



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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

IN THIS ISSUE
Celebrate the Year of the Rat /C2

ROASTED pigeon breast and seared duck liver with lavender-scented waffle and black vinegar jus

Another award-winning performance in the offing

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Careers Of The Time...
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KITCHEN RESCUE
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IT IS EASE TO BE HAPPY FOR people who, in spite of fame and success, remain unchanged.

Ariel Manuel was a student pursuing a degree in architecture while working at a hotel to earn his keep many years ago.

The job he had was not food service-related but he always managed to wangle the kitchen and watch the chefs. One day he was asked if he would be interested in working and training with them.

From one hotel job to another, Manuel absorbed all he could.

Then came duties. He was chef Norbert Gandler, Mandarin Oriental hotel's former executive chef. Gandler became his mentor.

From Mandarin's kitchens, under Gandler, Philippine culinary history was made and some of the country's finest chefs emerged—Romulo Narzoza, Rosebey Escalante and Manuel.

To date, Manuel remains "the" force to reckon with in culinary competitions and is, perhaps, the most formidable chef in the country. Thank God he is getting old and many competitions have age limits. Hahaha!

He was team captain of the victorious Philippine contingent to last year's Hong Kong Culinary Classic. He will once again be our captain in the 2008 Food Hunters Expo in Singapore.

Obviously gifted with the Midas touch, Manuel conducted the Lolo Dad's team that scored gold once again at the 2007 Host & Livestock Australia Black Box Culinary Challenge in Manila.

Manuel's winning menu is now being showcased at Lolo Dad's. This is the menu that they are perfecting as they prepare to represent the Philippines in the 2008 Regional Finals of the Asia-Pacific Black Box in Dubai.

Words aren't enough

At best as I can, I will try to put into words the delight of my taste buds as I savored Manuel's masterpieces.

Among my favorites—because those were the dishes in which the chef's genius shone the brightest—were Compressed Soup Sea Fish, Seafood Green Quenelle, Marinated Salmon Citrus Jelly, Micro Greens, Herb Panko and Aioli.

The freshness of the habitat and the salmon, plus the master's technique—per-

ANOTHER C1

LOLO Dad's culinary team representing the Philippines in Dubai: Ariel Tipan, Maria Virginia Villena, Daryll Manalaac, Jeffrey Pagalanlan

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CHICKEN Pandan I Shawn by Robinsons Supermarket

Manila dining perks up

Midtown wants to reestablish itself as a landmark in the capital city, providing an exciting link to two of the city's oldest and most storied districts, Ermita and Malate

CHEESES from Deluxe Recipe, Robinsons Supermarket

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

FOODIES WHO hang out in Ermita and Malate no longer need to feel "abandoned" despite the transfer of many of the districts' better dining places to Makati and other parts of Metro Manila.

Now they have a whole range of eateries to choose from—from fine food to dinner that dou-

APPETIZERS from Chef's Quarter, Pasta de Bahamas, Gambo, Penang Roll, UCC Cafe Terrace and Pandan's

ble as brewery, by not taking a few steps and without getting out of the complex.

Midtown, which is also a residential development project, aims to breathe new life to the historic Ermita-Malate district, even while it is still a work in progress. Rhea Mapa, Robinsons Manila general manager, said while the area looked back to its old Ermita landmark, the Midtown blend, it was also a reflection of what they hoped the complex would become—"the center of Manila."

Midtown's mix of establishments, particularly the lineup of dining places, was meant to cater to the varying needs of a diverse market like Manila's, Mapa said.

A bridge

Though Midtown is virtually on the Ermita side, its main entrance opens to the Malate side. The design, according to Mapa, was just what the Robinsons group wanted because the establishment was meant to link up two of Manila's most storied districts, where the city's—and the country's—affluent, powerful and influential people used to live.

Still very much a work in progress, Mapa said Robinsons Midtown, which is under the supervision of Irving L. Yu, group property manager, would be "a one-stop shopping, lifestyle, office + retail mixed-use development with an al fresco area, a lifestyle center, entertainment facilities [including] brand-new cinemas..."

At present, Midtown has some 20 food establishments. More are expected to open next month.

The 20 that have already set up shop include Chef's Quarter, Pasta de Bahamas Cafe & Tapas Bar, Gambo, Penang, PBL, UCC Cafe Terrace, Steakhaus, The Old Spaghetti House, Banana Leaf Asian Cafe, C2 Classic Cuisine, Balinese Experience, Recipes Modern Asian Bistro, The Classic Bakery Canteen, Tempura Japanese Grill, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Secret Recipe, Sucrose Patisserie & Cafe and KFC.

Mapa said, in designing the layout of the new dining and retailing over the old mile, the Robinsons Malls group wanted Midtown visitors, particularly local customers, to feel the difference without losing that sense of familiarity that made people patronize the establishment.

Chinese New Year specials

DINING OUT

SHANG'RI-LA'S DINING PALACE celebrates the Chinese New Year with the Fen Gang procession and various set menus until Feb. 12. Shang'ri-La offers the classic Chinese New Year takeaway elegant gift boxes. It is available at the Shang Palace Kitchen at the main lobby until Feb. 5. Also available is the delicious 'satthi cake. Start the year with the bountiful Emperor's Feast Buffet by special a la carte items like deep-fried crabmeat tao yueh with crab meat dip and baked lobster and roast pork combo with quail eggs and chestnuts. The special Chinese New Year One Buffet menu includes fried bean curd skin roll with cod fish or steamed spinach dumpling. Reservations are also available for families or large groups of four more. Choose from two locations—Ayala, Mkt. Mkt. or Glorietta, each consisting of more than 30 dishes with prices starting at two P90,000+. A special Chinese New Year Packages being offered by Shangri-La includes a lo hei—right day six-course menu with breakfast for two at Circles Event Café, 30 yee sang with an assortment of nuts and complimentary mandarin drinks. The offer is valid Feb. 7-10, for P11,000+. Call 8402004 or 8120888.

EUSEBIO'S RESTAURANTE LA BOTTE Steakhouse Palawan offers a scrumptious feast for the Chinese New Year, Feb. 6-7. Delicacies like lobster, radish cake, among others are available at the Main Lobby Booth. Call 8556888.

CROWNE PLAZA GALLERIA MANILA will welcome the Year of the Rat with an authentic Chinese spread, Feb. 7-10, at the Town Restaurant. Executive Chef Sau Lee's Chinese New Year banquet features a fusion of Beijing, Hong Kong, Singaporean and Taiwanese cuisine. Highlights of his Yee Sin offerings include the Chinese New Year Salad / Yu Sheng; Roasted Suckling Pig served with steamed rice bun; 5 Treasure stuffed chicken with glutinous rice; Braised Pork Leg with Bird's Nest and Shark's Fin Dumpling; and Bamboo Pith with White Snow and Crab Meat Deep Fried Bean curd Roll with Lobster. Steamed Fresh Scallop with Japanese Bean curd in Celery Sauce and Braised Sea cucumber with Dried Oyster. Auspicious treats on the menu include Steamed Glutinous Rice Cake, Steamed Black Fin Bun filled with Lotus and Steamed Chicken Dumpling and Bamboo Pith with Pork Shoulder and Crab Meat, with Pork Shoulder and Crab Meat. As extra attractions like Two Japanese Sabrot Seaweed Roll with Salt and Pepper Bean curd Fried Crispy-shred Duck with Mango. Call 6937222 loc. 7245 or 6905114.

HERITAGE HOTEL's Chinese Cuisine offers Lo Hei Prosperity Lunch/Dinner buffet for P+ 288+ per person, Feb. 6-21. Enjoy the newly flavored Yu Sheng Salad. Braised Pork with Soya Sauce, Sticky Rice Wrapped in Lotus Leaf, Young Tau Foo, Mini Pot Pies with Chinese Sausages, Young Tau Yong (Mini Pot Soup), Ho Si Fan Chow (Braised Fried Oyster with Black Moss and Vegetables), Glutinous Rice Dumplings, Fresh Fish Cooked with Salted Peanuts, Executive chef Sunny Sin lists down as dessert his recipe: tikoi and mango of sampling and sharing Yu Sheng the Lunar New Year Prosperity Salad Platter. Exclusive gourmet signature abundance, prosperity and luck. Yu Sheng is available for takeout and dine-in at Harbor Cafe during the 15 days of the Lunar New Year. For more information, or to make a packet for four persons, Call 8545888 or e-mail foodservice@heritagehotelmanila.com.

WATERFRONT Manila Pavilion Hotel celebrates the Chinese New Year with a reservation at their Specialty Ala Mohammed Restaurant, who specializes in Chinese, Malaysian, Japanese, Thai, French cuisine. Mouthwatering creations are featured at Seasons, Patisserie, and Bookies. This month's featured dish, Thai Beef Curry, is available at the Bookies. Call 5251212 loc. 3100 and 3000.

MAHAN! Shangri-La's Yee Sang salad for good luck

'PICTURESQUE' PRALINE

Hyatt Hotel and Casino's Pastry Boutique celebrates Chinese New Year by offering its trademark chocolate Chrysanthemum with the addition of Chinese New Year piece ornaments and Mandarins. The ornaments here are made of nesting ingredients like lotus seeds, red beans, sesame seeds and peanuts. Call 240-1234.

PLACE TO UNWIND

The Bedroom at Eastwood City Walk-in-bamboo king suits kick off their shoes and literally put their feet up to relax while listening to great music and enjoying good food. A must-try is Bedroom's ribs, tender with an excellent balance of the sweet-smoky flavor of hickory sauce. The generous serving of Hickory Smoked Ribs comes with thin slices of sweet potato and corn on the cob. Complement it with raspberry mojito shots. Call 6211163 or visit BISTRONOMY.

Yin and yang of dining

THE FOODUM OFFERS TIPS ON THE yin and yang of dining.

The World of Feng Shui suggests lucky food for the Year of the Earth Rat while Shoki Mack, Graciano Arias Seafood, and Banana Leaf restaurants showcase their specialty offerings.

To the Chinese, yang is the feasting masculine while yin is the nourishing feminine food.

The World of Feng Shui suggestions for lucky Food items are, among others, yin jade Uniu, pearls roses and pakchoy; and yang jade prunes, fish and dumpling soup. As with good will messages from King Shennugan Lillian Too.

Shoki Mack offers a Chinese New Year of yang Food like Pork Belly and Barbeque and the other dishes like Golden Mushroom and Roast Duck.

Diners get complimentary desserts like Ruyis, Sticky and Creamy Mango Sago.

Guidonia offers yang menus like Sea Cicone Cash, Engagement Gift Cash and Steamed Live Lapu Lapu, and yin items like Fried Chinese Spring Rolls.

Diners get complimentary Fried Chinese Spring Rolls.

Banana Leaf chef Lenny Yu says Restaurante Chicken, a yang food, is lucky for Chinese New Year.

Visitors to The Foodum can learn more about the Year of the Rat from experts of the World of Feng Shui on Feb. 9. Lion and Dragon dance performances will be featured.

Resto celebrates Mardi Gras

GUMBO, A NEW ORLEANS Restaurante, celebrates the Mardi Gras Festival until Feb. 3.

Staff members will wear costumes, the kind of which will be revealed on Feb. 3. Guests who come to Mardi Gras costumes will receive gift certificates. Out they can see on their next visit.

A live jazz band will play on Feb. 1-3, 6 p.m., at Gumbo in SM Mall of Asia. A parade will be held Feb. 3, 5 p.m.

Guests who order the Bourbon Bliss will receive a specially made bourbon glass. If birthday celebrations during the week get a Mardi Gras headdress. They will also get a complimentary dessert.

Aside from MOA, Gumbo is also at The Block, SM North Edsa and Robinsons Place Manila.

Food expo opens today

THE 7TH PHILIPPINE FOOD Expo opens today at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall.

The fair is under the auspices of the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters' Organization (Philexport), the biggest umbrella organization of local food processors and exporters.

Guests of honor include Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Philippine Exporters Confederation President Joseph Ortiz, and Donald Dee of Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Over 200 participants are expected. Regional delicacies will be featured in the First Regional Food Biz.

Philexport president Roberto Sanchez said the trade fair would bring together players in the food industry, entrepreneurs and businessmen.

The event that ends Feb. 3, aims to introduce specialties, basic raw materials, product information, product samplings and daily ordering documentation.

Feasting and festivities

MELISSA'S RESTAURANT AT THE PENINSULA Manila marks Chinese New Year with festivities. This is the Year of the Brown Rat, a time of hard work, serenity and renewal.

Three items in the Year of the Rat tend to be logical readers, shrewd, charming, ambitious and inventive.

This is a good year to begin a new job, get married, launch a product or make a fresh start.

Sources hope this year may not yield but yet more, but opportunities will come for people who are well prepared and resourceful.

The best way to succeed is to be patient and let things develop slowly.

Food plays a significant role in the celebration of the Chinese New Year.

Huge amounts are bought, prepared, eaten and enjoyed among family and friends.

Food served to mark the new year, the shapes and colors, has symbolic meaning.

Call 8070888, extension 6743 and 6746.

MELISSA'S Chinese New Year feasts and dinner buffet runs Feb. 7 to Feb. 19. For adults and P688+ for children.

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Arvisu

Feasting on memorable Bulacan specialties

WE ARRIVED IN MALOLOS, Bulacan before the end of Dec 8Mass in the small chapel in Barangay Sto. Niño.

Beatings gave the priest the necessary focus on Rondo, mostly young children playing modern dance music, called dans Asensa marching tunes, practiced their routine.

Small carrosas lined the streets, each one displaying the Sto. Niño, mostly dressed in finery but some close to shepherd's costume or Hawaiian attire.

Finally, the Mass ended and the procession started. We watched everything from the best vantage point, on the second floor of one of the old houses.

The house belongs to Dez Ramirez's family. It is easy to spot because of the carrosela that line its façade.

When I first visited it, I knew I would like it because of those figures of women that dominated the whole structure. Some had, many importantly, it was where I was introduced to Bulacan food done by cooks who made memorable specialties...lechonada, empanadang kalalo, sarsa, lechon, sapin sapin.

Every January, the tornado our almost the Sto. Niño fiesta but last Sunday was only the second time I attended.

You late, too early

A few years back, I convinced some of my friends and relatives to go there so we were not late to see the procession in the morning and we had to leave before the evening procession began because it would have been hard to get out of those narrow streets.

But we enjoyed looking at the different Sto. Niño images at the altars in front of their houses. Our favorites that year were the sleeping image dressed like a baby and the crystal Santo Niño encased with colored paper decorations with the Sto. Niño in the passenger seat, the place of honor.

Dez told us to come early to have breakfast at his place.

Breakfast, however, is not the first meal of the fiesta. The night before, the Inspector or tenpers, all those who help to clean the streets up the place and down the carrosas are treated to fiesta cooking.

This is why the hostess does not stop at fiesta time. There are preparations days before of food that feed more than one day to ask. Small chew the Inspector, then the whole fiesta day when breakfast, lunch, merienda and dinner will have to be served.

GETTING ready for the procession

The eggs were the highest on the menu. Pinapaw (or was already fried. Sinigang was placed in a rather elaborate silver bowl giving the cutlinery I had two come inspections.

The Arsenuels, host made Pasis pork belly then cooked in sugar and pineapple, was being arranged on the platters. Two kinds of pan de sal, small and smaller) were being taken out of paper bags. And, that early, we were to have leche flan.

And so we had breakfast on the long table covered with the best tablecloths, an orange silk number underneath a white cutlery tablecloth that Dez had had embroidered in Laguna.

Antique dinnerwares

Plates in "bring-out-your-best" day. We laughed about plates and cut glass that were older than us. The leche flan plate, for instance, was described by Dez to be as old as Apolinaldo, the primeval Santa Cruise who became the Philippines' first president.

We admired the silver, heavy and elaborate pieces like the ice bucket shaped like a pineapple and trays with handles decorated with bunches of grapes.

Waiters kept coming, some bringing the specialties of their own houses or lechon that were added to the menu.

Breakfast over, we had been fully digested yet when lunch was prepared for serving. The kitchen was a busy hive with three cooks doing the work, each one lowering what they had to contact that day. The dishes were recipes of the house, from Dez's lola that he tried to preserve by having those cooks do them the way his lola did.

The chicken pastel, for instance, even with the shortcut, had a rubric flavoring and was enhanced by the inclusion of spatid (or water chestnuts).

There were lechon so large that looked like adobo or fried pigues but was really pork cooked in soy sauce and sugar, almost but not quite adobado.

I visited the kitchen just in time to see cheese being grated into the beef kaldereta recipe.

"Bida, done the old-fashioned way where the creamy half was mixed in caramelized sugar, and possibly de leche flan. The sweets that would cure our satiety. "But don't forget to eat some pulot," suggested Dez. The Malolos specialty is but two pieces of cake moistened in a creamy sauce course.

Amid all that food, the guests also talked about food. Per rose, moved about the old and new restaurants in Malolos. Aristocrat's Mr. Malolos enterprises could be had. The diners had either Chinese buns or rolled egg on top, creamy butter mixed with grated quezo de bola and sugar.

Another look into the kitchen and we saw corn cobs being done for merienda. Kalamay would be brought in later, the cooks told me. They were simply getting ready for the evening when more people were expected. So Arsenio, the nice dish cooked in mongo and coconut milk, would be there. And there would be lechon.

But it was time to go. Dez was disappointed because he wanted me to see how the merienda and dinner were served in the patio he had made on one side of the house that he said he would rent out for weddings and anniversaries.

My family laughed when I told them I was so tired from eating. I am not used to having a siesta but that day, though I thought I was just resting for a while, I slept for two hours making up just in time for dinner. Of course, I ate again.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood09@yahoo.com

DYNASTIES a photo memory

Don't let that appliance checker inside your home

THE CONSUMER

By Linda B. Bohlo

EUFEMIA CUNA, VICE president for corporate communications of the Manila Electric Company, warns "to make it categorically clear that Meralco does not authorize nor deploy field representatives to randomly check on the consumption of individual households. Our responsibility is only up to the metering point and we do not allow our employees to go inside the customer's house to check their appliances."

Cuna was reacting to an issue in the column about a person introducing herself as a Meralco employee but actually touring the service of another company in house electricity consumption.

Cuna said they were well aware of people going around posing as their employees.

"The most prevalent of these schemes involve consumption individuals ... asking Meralco Manila employees about their billing statements and their household's electricity consumption. According to our previous investigations, these imitos operated a to check individuals' electricity consumption and will be able to get inside the household."

Cuna said consumption patterns were used only as a guide in case of billing complaints, but a legitimate Meralco employee did not have to go inside a client's house and check individual appliances or evaluate the consumption pattern.

"Our responsibility is only up to the metering point," he pointed out.

Cuna advised Meralco customers to report the impostors to its call center, 16211.

Tipping required

A gratuity or tip, according to the dictionary "is a gift of money, over and above payment due for service ... something given without claim or demand."

But, in many places, regardless of the kind of service you get, people expect to be tipped. And, if you look like you are not a generous tipper, they make you feel like attending to you is an ordeal.

A reader's experience in some eatery in Quezon City is worse. It seems the establishments have made tipping compulsory.

The waiter said, after her massage, the masseuse would hand her a piece of paper. She said it was a "tip sheet." Here the customer was supposed to fill out with the name of the masseuse and the amount she was giving. The customer was then supposed to sign the form.

"I have nothing against tipping," the reader said, "but shouldn't a tip be given wholeheartedly and by force?"

She added that, if you failed to tip the masseuse, you would not get attended to when you returned.

"It is just not right. Please bring anything going for wrong customer?" she said.

Feedback

Acting on the complaint of a reader about a tampered automated teller machine, Elvira E. Hitching-Leclez, head, Industrial consumer affairs group, said the Bank of Commerce immediately replaced the equipment with a new one with an added feature called calendars.

"This is a device which will allow unreleased cash from a successful withdrawal to clip off," she said.

The latter sender was pleased that some unscrupulous individuals attempted to defraud customers of the ATM that prevented the release of the cash he withdrew.

He said he was about to leave the machine thinking it malfunctioned when he returned and there seemed to be something different about it.

All it took is poking and pressing, he was able to activate the correction and found his money caught in it.

Send letters to The Consumer, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Makati and Ayala Ave., Makati City; or e-mail lbohlo@inquirer.com.ph.

Another award-winning performance in the offing

From page C1

but execution—inside the lettuce absolutely divine. It melted in your mouth!

The chilled quenelle spread perfectly on the warm pasta, which I suspected with a relish of fruit, vegetables and citrus jelly which gave it sublime hints of sweetness. With it, a slight tick of garlic from the drizzled aioli. The few strands of micro-greens accented sweetness, the "green" keeping everything from being cloying.

When I drop talaga, may do nothing reason ng!

Then came the Lobster and Prawn Dumpling in Mushrooms and Saffron broth. To save the lesser the harrowing exercise of describing the dish, I just get the recipe. Read through it and imagine how it tastes.

You will probably agree, considering that this is a soup, that the only missing ingredient is a spoon. Literally. Hapit! It was like an ocean filled with all its bounty; the saffron giving it more depth.

Shellfish in Mushrooms and Saffron Broth

Clarified Fish Stock
4 l fish stock
1 k mix of lobster head, prawn shell, fish bones
300 g combination of white onion, white part only of celery and leeks
6 pc eggs, white only
250 g tablespoon, minced
Combine stock, lobster head, prawn shells, fish bones, onion, celery, leeks.
Bring to a boil, simmer, strain.
Combine fish stock and egg whites. Add to stock.
Gently simmer until stock is completely clarified.
Makes 1 liter clarified stock.

Prawn Dumpling
100 g prawn, minced
60 ml whipping cream
20 g onion, chopped
1 pc egg, white only
salt and pepper to taste
Combine ingredients.
Form into small balls.
Poach until cooked.

Mushroom and Saffron Broth
1 l clarified fish stock
60 g tomato sauce
75 g mushrooms
1/2 g garlic, chopped
pinch saffron
juice of 1 half lemon
parsley coarsely chopped
salt and pepper to taste
Combine all ingredients.
Simmer. Adjust seasoning.
To serve: Add prawn dumplings to the broth. Garnish with Boccus.

Then, there was oil, mortal sin, in the guise of a dish called Roasted Pigeon Breast with Duck Liver.

The poisonous of the pigeon was simply to cover richer by the fats. (I was told on top of a waffle infused with lavender and topped with compotes of apple and shallots, then finished off with roasted cherry and reduced black vinegar. Again, the contrasting flavors of sweet and savory to make one perfect dish!

If dreadnought is your idea of a fabulous experience, keep this dish in mind! By itself, an aphrodisiac that brings your pituitary system to overload.

Spiegel Sabong sweet!

Arief, through the years, I have hailed your talent and endurance. I considered it a privilege to do so.

To us, your peers, you have brought much pride, and to our country a great honor!

Mabuhay, Kapitan! We wish you luck to Dubai and to Singapore!

Lolo Bulo is at 099 Quezon ave., cor. Lore (0406); tel. 5262269.

E-mail the author at vsqr@inquirer.com.ph

LOBSTER and Prawn Dumpling in Mushrooms and Saffron broth

COMPRESSED Deep Sea Fish, Seafood Cream Quenelle, Marinated Salmon Citrus Jelly, Micro Greens, Herb Puree and Aioli

House of bravura Italian taste

From page C4

A serving of risotto is good for two persons. Choose either the Italian rice vegetarian or Italian rice with asparagus and parmesan cheese.

Fresh Salmon with Onions and Lemon Sauce is ideal for fish lovers, while Tender Veal Shank in Bbq lemon-style sauce is for meat eaters.

Also make room for dessert—panna cotta and crème brûlée.

Despite being a fine-dining place, Cuneo is not intimidating. It's warm and inviting. It has a homey feeling accentuated by the wooden tables dressed in salmon pink table cloth and well-used wood chairs and warm lights that give off a nice, homey feeling. Blessed the room you can see framed pictures of different sizes of the famous Italian singer Enrico Caruso. The restaurant obviously was named after him.

The restaurant can sit about 80-100 persons, ideal for big groups holding anniversaries and parties.

Prices are reasonable, averaging about P350-P500 for an entrée.

The only drawback is the parking. The parking lot is limited as the place can get pretty busy.

Cuneo is open for lunch and dinner. Reservations are requested because the place gets crowded quickly any day of the week. Call 8924251 or 0919-7117834.

Clarified Fish reflects an extensive selection of Italian wines.

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Named after the great Italian tenor of the 20th century, Caruso Ristorante Italiano is one address where encores and second servings are always in order

HOMEMADE Tagliolini with Salmon and Caviar

FRESH Salmon with Orange and Lemon Sauce

House of bravura Italian taste

Text by Virgie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudel Reyes

ITALIAN FOOD IS NOT ALIEN anymore to Filipino taste buds. In fact, we've learned to embrace the pizza and the pasta that they have become part of our daily meals.

We have developed a passion for tortellini, risotto, focaccia and espresso. Our insatiable appetite for genuine Italian food is further whetted by the relaxed Italian approach to dining.

Italian cuisine are given a great deal of thought. The food is carefully prepared and eaten in leisurely fashion, and to savor rest in an ideal romantic ambiance.

A good Italian meal always promises to satisfy the appetite and tickle the taste buds.

Caruso Ristorante Italiano, located on Newport Garcia Street (formerly Bepanci) in the Fort, Makati, has been holding up the banner for Italian cooking for six years now. It serves authentic Italian dishes—yes, authentic because most of its ingredients come straight from Italy, including starches, flour, extra virgin olive oil, cheeses, sauces, and other flavors and spices.

"In order to be authentic, you have to use authentic ingredients coming from the source country," says Italian owner Dario Gardini, who recently has taken a new Italian business partner, Emilio Mini. Both have no culinary background, but they share a passion for good food.

Both also had early exposure to the service industry. Gardini's mother used to run a trattoria in Milan, while Mini's grandfather had a hotel.

The abundance and variety of this cuisine, fine dining Italian restaurant's fabulous offerings have captivated Filipinos and expats. In fact, 70 percent of its regular clientele are expats. Rest, including Japanese, Chinese, Europeans, and the staff of the Italian embassy.

The menu offers a nice selec-

RISOTTO Arborio rice Vegetarian, Italian vegetarian rice

DARIO Gardini toasts authentic Italian dishes.

tion of Italian favorites, including a variety of antipasti, salads and desserts. Italian wines can be ordered by the bottle or by the glass. Most especially, the service is good. The wait staff is attentive to every guest's needs.

Memorable meal

A memorable meal always begins with an assorted bread plate. Freshly baked ciabatta and focaccia. And you can ask for mozzarella sticks while ordering. The bread comes with a dipcontaining of olive oil, balsamic vinegar and parmesan cheese.

Caruso has over 20 different pastas to choose from. But you can't go wrong with Tagliolini Nero (or al) Salmone e Caviale. It's a creamy homemade tagliolini with chunks of salmon and caviar. Or you can opt for Cappelletti ai Funghi Porcini dell'Umbria, which is homemade pasta with mushroom porcini sauce.

MORE ▸▸

MAHI-FRIED red slicer with potato croquettes

TIRAMISU Delis

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DID YOU KNOW...

Depp-Cotillard, plus Bale

LOS ANGELES—FRENCH STAR MARION COTILLARD is in talks to star with Hollywood icon Johnny Depp in a crime drama to be directed by Michael Mann. Cotillard, up for an Oscar for her portrayal of Edith Piaf in "La Vie En Rose," may play the girlfriend of bankrobber John Dillinger (Depp). Mann's next Christian Bale ("The Dark Knight"), may play a detective hunting Dillinger. AFP

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'Proudly' revamped

Charlene Gonzalez turns Kapuso from Kapamilya to host women's show

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

BEAUTY QUEEN CHARLENE Gonzalez is the new host of the GTV women's show "Proudly Filipina," taking over from original host Daphne Oseña Paez, who resigned recently.

Gonzalez, who previously hosted rival station ABS-CBN's lifestyle show, "Bi Home Ba Ito," is crossing network lines to do "Proudly."

GTV is a GMA 7 channel geared for upscale women.

"We are happy to welcome Charlene," Gigi Santiago-Lara, assistant vice president for Alternative Productions, told Inquirer Entertainment, adding that Gonzalez's target launch on "Proudly" is end of February.

Rehearsals with Martin

Martin Nievera, flanked by musical director Louie Ocampo, left, and orchestra conductor Gerard Salonga, warms up as rehearsals for his 25th anniversary concert, beginning Feb. 1, at Resorts World Manila, are underway. Story on page D6.

Writers get union nod for Grammys

LOS ANGELES—THE GRAMMY awards will be in full voice next month, with the striking writers guild agreeing Monday to allow its members to work on the show.

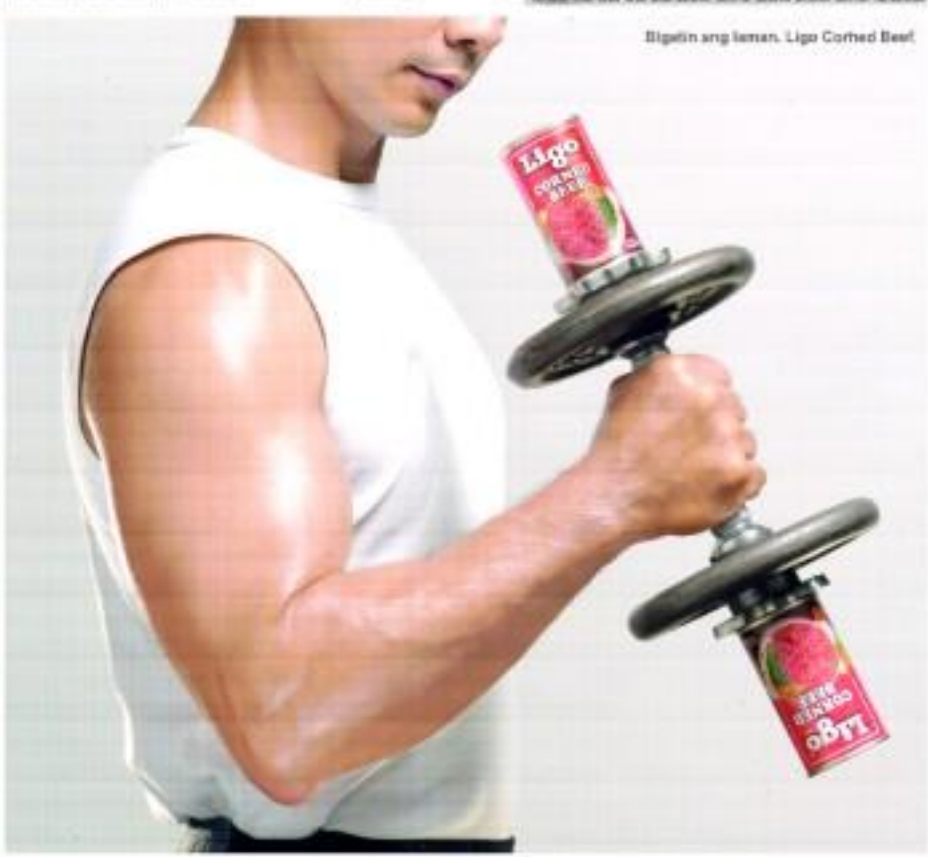
The Writers Guild of America gave its blessing last week to a pick-it-Fest Grammys.

The agreement allowing guild-covered writing for the Grammys is in support of union resistance and will help advance writers' core quest for "a fair contract," the guild said in a statement.

"Professional musicians face many of the same issues that we do concerning fair compensation for the use of their work in new media," Nicole M. Wolverton, president of the WGA West, said.

Payment for projects distributed via the Internet is a central issue in the contract dispute between the writers union and the alliance that represents studios.

The guild declined a waiver for the Academy Awards, casting doubts about the Feb. 24 Oscars if the strike continues and writers support a boycott. AP



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GALLERIA

1 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2 + THE	6 SAW IV
2 IN THE NAME of the KING	7 P.S. I LOVE YOU / SWEENEY TODD
3 27 DRESSES	8 indieline: ROSSANNE
4 ONE MISSED CALL (English)	9 NATIONAL TREASURE 2
5 CLOVERFIELD	10 JOHN RAMBO

ERMITA

1 IN THE NAME of the KING	6 JOHN RAMBO
2 indieline: CONDO / SIKL	7 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
3 ONE MISSED CALL (English)	1 P.S. I LOVE YOU
4 27 DRESSES	2 SAW IV
5 NATIONAL TREASURE 2 / I AM LEGEND	3 CLOVERFIELD

METRO EAST

1 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	5 CLOVERFIELD
2 P.S. I LOVE YOU / NATIONAL TREASURE 2	6 SAW IV
3 IN THE NAME of the KING	7 27 DRESSES
4 ONE MISSED CALL (English)	8 JOHN RAMBO

NOVALICHES

1 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR	5 SAW IV
2 27 DRESSES	6 JOHN RAMBO
3 ONE MISSED CALL (English)	7 IN THE NAME of the KING
4 CLOVERFIELD	

PIONEER

1 ONE MISSED CALL / 27 DRESSES	3 CLOVERFIELD
2 JOHN RAMBO	4 IN THE NAME of the KING

STA. ROSA

1 ALVIN and the CHIPMUNKS	5 DRAGON WAR
2 JOHN RAMBO	6 SYDNEY WHITE
3 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	7 SWEENEY TODD
4 THE HEARTBREAK KID	8 THE HEARTBREAK KID

LIPA

1 DRAGON WAR	
2 SYDNEY WHITE	
3 SWEENEY TODD	
4 THE HEARTBREAK KID	

DASMARINAS

1 27 DRESSES	5 JOHN RAMBO
2 CLOVERFIELD	
3 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	
4 JOHN RAMBO	

IMUS

1 SAW IV	5 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
2 ONE MISSED CALL (English)	6 JOHN RAMBO
3 CLOVERFIELD	
4 27 DRESSES	

ANGELES

1 CLOVERFIELD	4 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN
2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	
3 JOHN RAMBO	

TARLAC

1 SWEENEY TODD	
2 DESPERADOS	
3 DEATH PROOF	

STARMILLS

1 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	4 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN
2 JOHN RAMBO	5 DEATH PROOF
3 CLOVERFIELD	6 AMERICAN GANGSTER

BACOLOD

1 SWEENEY TODD	6 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN
2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	7 AMERICAN GANGSTER
3 HOOD of HORROR	
4 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN	
5 AMERICAN GANGSTER	
6 NATIONAL TREASURE 2	

ILOILO

1 DRAGON WAR	5 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN
2 SWEENEY TODD	6 AMERICAN GANGSTER
3 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	
4 JOHN RAMBO	

Did You Know...

'Isang Ngiti' for dentists

"Isang Ngiti Sa Isang Isang Tawa," the winning song that Lea Salonga performed on Saturday for the Philippine Dental Association's 2007 Makoto Awards (Pinoy Idols). Lyrics are by John Dwenal Isaacson, Jon commercial coordinator at the Mall of Asia Concert Hall in a composition of Ben Jonathon "Chino" Villeda.

Isaacson, 3rd place; Vladimir Rosario Gonzalez, who is also vice chair of the UP Filipino and Filipino Literature Department.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 Cloverfield
2 27 Dresses
3 One Missed Call
4 Alvin & the Chipmunks
Mirror vs. Predator
Rambo 4

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RAMBO 4
CLOVERFIELD
27 DRESSES
ONE MISSED CALL
ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 2

POWER PLANT CINEMA
ONE MISSED CALL PG13
CLOVERFIELD PG13
ALIENS VS. PREDATOR 2 R13
P.S. I LOVE YOU PG13
IN THE NAME OF THE KING PG13
JOHN RAMBO R13
27 DRESSES PG13

NOW SHOWING
WHAT WILL IT SOUND LIKE WHEN YOU DIE?
ONE MISSED CALL

MTRCB R-13
TRUST YOU WOULDN'T BE THERE. THEN YOU JUST TRY THIS. JUST TO SEE IF YOU SURVIVED THE HORROR.
NOW, YOU'RE IN FOR A DEADLY SURPRISE.
SAW IV
NOW SHOWING

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL
PROMENADE
1 2 IN THE NAME OF THE KING
3 ONE MISSED CALL
4 CLOVERFIELD
5 27 DRESSES

At the Cinemas

GLORIETTA 1	1 ONE MISSED CALL	2 CLOVERFIELD	3 IN THE NAME OF THE KING	4 ABANDONED		
GLORIETTA 4	1 ONE MISSED CALL	2 27 DRESSES	3 IN THE NAME OF THE KING			
	4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS	5	6 CLOVERFIELD	7 RAMBO 4		
GREENBELT 1	1 27 DRESSES	2 CLOVERFIELD				
GREENBELT 3	1 27 DRESSES	2 CLOVERFIELD				
	3 RAMBO 4	4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 2	5 ONE MISSED CALL			
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 CLOVERFIELD	2 IN THE NAME OF THE KING				
	3 27 DRESSES	4 RAMBO 4	5 ONE MISSED CALL			
MAKATI CINEMA SQUARE	1 CLOVERFIELD	2 MAGNA THE CHIPMUNKS	3 RAMBO 4	4 ABANDONED		
MARKET! MARKET!	1 CLOVERFIELD	2 RAMBO 4				
	3 27 DRESSES	4 IN THE NAME OF THE KING	5 ONE MISSED CALL			
TRINOMA	1 RAMBO 4	2 RAMBO 4	3 27 DRESSES	4 IN THE NAME OF THE KING		
	5 ONE MISSED CALL	6 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 2	7 CLOVERFIELD			

At the Malls

Ayala Malls

- Glorietta — Photowalk Manila, January 28 to February 3
- Greenbelt — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3
- Alabang Town Center — Alvin & The Chipmunks Live at Alabang Town Center, January 26 & 27, 11am, 2pm & 4pm, Activity Center
- Ayala Center Cebu — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3
- Market! Market! — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3
- Cinema 76 — Repertory Philippines presents Fortissimo and is welcome, January 11 to 27, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 687-4746 or visit www.repertory.philippines.com
- Ayala Museum — Invasores of Philippine Art: Paintings by Juan Luna, Fernando Amorsolo, and Fernando Zobel. For more info, pls. call 757-0107 to 21 loc. 30 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
- Tri Noma — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3

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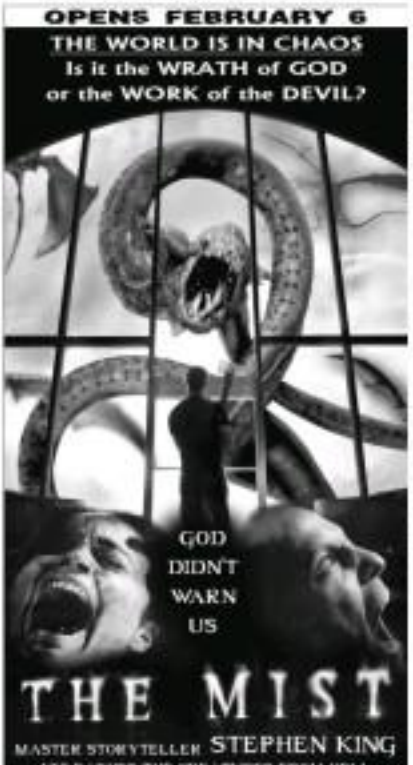
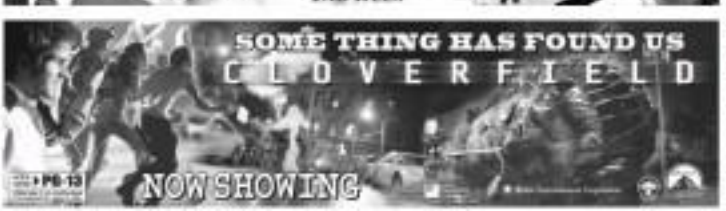


MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING



CAPTION: Another video on languages from our balcony

Three years...

From page D1

...ka, Study-mates. Tim sing dapat na pwede na, ...bang kita.

Tiz: Mag-aral muna. Magpapakahirap na ang mga magaling para makapag-aral sana. Ayun talaga kasabi ang anak nating walang alam. Wag ala magtatrabaho muna ng TV tsaka mag-aral.

Andie: Ako pwedeng pumapalit na muna ko kay Angelique dito ng PSE Rising Young amazin' "Dialogo ko yung PBP na 'yun!" Ang ad-vice kasi, kabwisitan, at ingayan, kaygas na ko dahilan ang hard at soft ng dalag ko. Wag silang gagawa ng game's, bako pa-love lighting mga dalang-lamaki.

Nadine: Mag-po-edit gagawin-ang mga na-pagawad nila sa PC Bulwark, nakapanood ako na mga nabalog di manika ang nanood po ang-Radio nila kasi talaga yun. Mag-edit gagawin yun.

Ballerie: Ahh ngo po sabihi 'mag ala manandang manonood ng TV pero dapat 'pag pinlak ng "Chibi BLEH" kayo na ang magpa-

Bie: Dahil 'pag wala nilang nakitang ela sa window. Mag-mahigabuhagin po ako kung mga-nasa mal-lumalabas sa hotels, 'mag-tatang nila ngayon.

Mokee: Baka 'mag po silang magdag channel

("Gen' Bulbil" airs Sundays 7 p.m. after "Bard 8" on ABS-CBN.)

A concert...

From page D1

...ing what it. There's also that free..."

He knew Esmond and says he's thinking something nobody in the entertainment press knows about. "I didn't want to fill them in-cause it wouldn't not be interpreted as a gim-mick to promote the concert."

It's about a "surprise" number in the con-cert, in which Mokie and wife Bebot and Rom will sing a song they all three of them have— for Hope. "It's a new song called 'Take Care of Me,' written to what Hope has always wanted to see and say now," Mokie explains. "I always thank and Hope to give him words I'm grateful they are in their mother. I told them it's a-write one verse each and I took care of the third... I hope Pope gets the message."

The pain of his failed marriage and the de-cision to find happiness with a son and family are set aside for now, as Mokie walks into the re-hearsal studio and proceeds to sing with the orchestra.

At the end of our interview, "Sana Lamang Ang Hindahalin," he sighs and pretends to roll— a typical mock-tantrum.

'Proudly'...

From page D1

Mela Esguerra, program manager, said Gretchen Ugsinsiyan the show's idea of a proud Filipina."

Esguerra explained, "She's a full-time mom and career woman who endeavors to be the best what she can be, both in and out of the home."

Ugsinsiyan is married to actor Jay Ilustrisimo. They have twins, Andrea and Alisha, now 6 years old.

"But she leads a very active lifestyle," Lara noted. "She's into sports and fitness. Her mom [Evie told me that she's an] outdoor-ding."

Esguerra pointed out that Gretchen "has a good image" — which, he said, was in keeping with the show's inspirational inspi-rational goals.

Few innovations

The show itself remains technically the same," said Lara.

"We still have the same director, Tim Antonio, and the same AME," Esguerra added.

The concept remains the same as well, said Lara.

"We are still doing profiles of successful and inspiring Filipinos," Esguerra said. "That is, women who have touched other people's lives and made a difference in their communities."

Audience participation is an innovation in the revamped "Proudly," said Lara.

For example, Esguerra said, "Viewers can nominate their own Proud Filipinas' via e-mail and/or snail-mail."

Lara stressed that nominees could be ordinary women from all walks of life.

Produced and hosted by Tim Antonio (nominees their own "Proud Filipinas."

"She can be a mom or a teacher whom they look up to," Esguerra said. "My mom Rosie is par' to them also."

A diarie novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

A. LIPA

BY EDUARDO

PUGAD BABOY

BY PIC UNOK

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WIDGY

BY LYN GARCELLANO

LOVEWHOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHONGUO

RIKO MACHINE

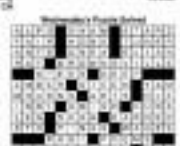
BY FRANZ ABREN

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Mitch Clachrane
Myrtle Beach, SC



Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: People rarely notice you. You have an unassuming personality. In part, you cultivate this because you want to be heard. You have a message. You want to be appreciated for your ideas. You want to reveal your attractive qualities. You need the respect of others. In the year ahead, relationships are blessed. Social opportunities will be plentiful and exciting!

Birthdays of: Justin Timberlake, singer; Minnie Driver, actress; Anthony Hopkins, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Over the next year, your ability to put your name out to others, your promoting your marvelous writing and charm will be excellent. You career will proliferate and blossom.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your luck in 2008 is a particularly good one for matters related to education, publishing, the media and teaching/lecturing.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your career opportunities will increase. You will be fortunate to learn what you need to do. This is also a time to travel.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Communication will open new doors for you. Networking relationships will be important. Use your talents to help you, and vice versa. Some of you will marry someone older or wiser.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is the year to improve your job skills. You'll be rewarded for your efforts. Something will happen that makes your work more pleasant. Your health will improve as well!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your on-a-day-to-day relationships will be very rewarding. You will receive a form of gratification that will make you feel good. Someone will be willing to help you reach your goals.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're going to learn how to save money and handle debt. In 2008, I have a feeling a lot of people will. You'll be getting out of debt. You'll learn something.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Work will be a time of joy for you. You'll enjoy what you're doing. Your contacts will increase. Make sure you're friendly with everyone you meet. You're just unsure to us. Stop to do and people to see.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You will be lucky in love. You'll be the envy of many. You will be surrounded by people who love you. Make the most of the situation.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You better watch your back for a while. Someone will be trying to undermine you. Be careful and choosing. You'll attract a lot of new people. Be careful and protect yourself. Make the most of the situation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Many of you will explore relationships, spiritual and religious experiences. Some of you will find a new place. You might want a vacation or you. Or you might be content with yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): A popular year awaits you. Many people will want to be your friend. Get out and socialize. People can help you now, often you can help them as well.

DAILY SUDOKU

Concepts Sudoku

By Dave Green

			5	3	8			
			2			5	7	
		4					1	9
	3			7				5
9								3
7			3				6	
1	9					6		
	7	8			1			
		5	4	7				

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	6	9	5	4	7	8	1	3
3	8	4	1	2	9	6	7	5
1	5	7	3	8	6	2	4	9
5	9	6	8	7	1	4	3	2
6	4	2	9	3	5	7	9	1
7	3	1	2	5	4	9	8	6
8	7	3	9	1	2	5	6	4
9	1	5	4	6	8	3	2	7
4	2	8	7	3	5	1	9	8

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JOSHUA TOCSON
mild-yet-hamster
[amp]

PROGRAM director Edgar Manila, right, with creative manager Ricky Victoria, center, and assistant director Mavie Santos

MARA SCHWITTAL, 12

MARIE ORNEDA, 8

ELLA CRUZ, 11

KATHRYN BERNARDO, 11

RONY "DANIEL" PASTRANA Jr.
contestant

Three years and counting

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Rony Hamilton

CRITICS HAVE BEEN ATTACKING THE shows but the people behind the kiddie gag program 'Goin' Bulilit' remain unfazed.

"The fact that we're marking our third anniversary means we're doing something right," said creative manager Ricky Victoria.

Directors have expressed disapproval of the actor Bulilit "Bidoy" Movie and his eight members-creative team for mentoring child actors to play adult roles.

"They do not understand that these kids are not different from adult actors who are told to play 'funny lines' roles. They simply do what they are told to do," Victoria said.

Movie added that his staff members take time to explain complicated jokes to the kids. Plus, they have successfully avoided gross jokes.

"Of course, there's a limit to what we can make them do," Victoria pointed out. "Pilipino jokes are okay. Conyo ang mga bata sa mga bata."

"Goin' Bulilit" is a sketch comedy show inspired by the 1980s top-rating gag program, "Goin' Bulilitan," which starred Movie, Christopher de Leon, Johnny Delgado and the late Joe Bagale. But the format of showcasing different groups of kids for each episode was a take-off on the now-defunct kiddie comedy show, "Batibot."

To come up with fresh ideas every week, Movie and his brainstorms with his team every Monday for six hours straight. Shereen Sares serves as the head writer, Mardi's son, Frazer, directs the show's "flashback" segment, Imelda Montilla is executive producer.

Reporter Entertainment visited the set of 'Goin' Bulilit' and had a chat with four kid actors — Mara Schwittal, 12; Kathryn Bernardo, 11; Ella Cruz, 11; Joshua Tocson, 9; and Nonie Oneza, 8.

Here are excerpts from the exchange, straight from the mouth of babes and peppered with "po" and "opo":

TAKE FIVE

What are some things can the viewers expect on the show now into its fourth year?

Mara: Mas go-gradeate po. Kasing mga ano sila-mas go-home over gamay-graduate. Malapit na po ako mag-13. Kaya malamang mag-graduate na ako. Aabot pa po.

Ella: Ah-eh-ipinako po.

What's your most memorable experience, working on the show?

Kathryn: Pahirin ko lang po yung nagsasama kami sa jungle.

Nonie: Ako po yung naglalaro kami ng games.

What do your parents always tell you? Do they ever get angry?

Joshua: Pinagpalalo po kami pag pabaging tuko wang tako. Siento po tako tuko ang kay.

Nagagalit din po pag mali-mali ang ginagawa.

Nonie: Sinasabihan po ako na wala akong pakaging tatapot. Ang sabi nila 'behaved si nalot para done akong lalaki'—mahusay naman po ako ng pinapakilos.

Who told you that, your mommy or your daddy?

Nonie: Mommy ko po. Ang nanay nasa-mina ang ama ko.

What is your advice to kids your age on their roommates will not get used at them?

Mara: Ang mga akong pa-nanay mahilig sa bahay lang e kaya sa gusaban lang. Kaka po magsasaad nila na 'wat ang ginagawa nawa, wag-wala gagagawin. Minsan-mala sila sa pag-aaral nila. Nawa lang nawan ano, ang dapat sapo-wala pag-aaral nila.

Kathryn: Mahilig ang mama nila sa parents e-

THREE B3

LOUIE Ocampo, Gerard Salonga and 5-16-piece orchestra will help Martin do "familiar songs in a big way"

A concert to mark a milestone

By Rochelle Concepcion

THE VIBRANT INTERPLAY OF horn players, violinists, guitarists and percussionists of the 50-piece Global Studio Orchestra lends conductor Gerard Salonga no hands (aka a smile on his body) access to the rhythm.

Studio fan sits Louie Ocampo on keyboards, who looks happy as well.

The orchestra, Salonga and Ocampo have been rehearsing for days in a studio in Alabang for Martin Nievera's concert tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum.

The significance of the show, which marks Nievera's 25th year in show biz, is felt in Salonga's insides (the orchestra's brass and woodwind) motions to put a stronger accent on certain notes in the song "Pain" — one of many hits in Nievera's singing career.

Salonga signals everyone to stop to emphasize his point. There's something lacking, he says, stressing the word for smooth transitions within the song.

A while back, the trumpet players were heard putting a brassy ending to another old Nievera hit, "Please Don't Throw Your Love Away."

For these preparations, a team watching how Martin himself is taking all the fun. He arrives after a few minutes, relaxed in a casual collared T-shirt, jeans and sneakers.

He wants to talk first, as he might unnecessarily throw off the musicians if he sings immediately.

It's not his first time to work with the group, Martin says, having performed with them and Lea Salonga in corporate shows. (Trumpet it, of course, Martin's long-time musical director and composer of a number of his songs. This student's name eventually, he notes, all the songs in the repertoire recall his years as the company's foremost pop star.

"These past few years, I've been trying to reinvent myself, doing 'Again' and other stuff. It feels good to come back and sing old, familiar songs... but in a big way," Martin says, pointing towards the orchestra.

He admires the way famed maestro, taking note of his youth, professionalism and dedication to percussion music with a classical touch. "I like him, he's a young artist with an old soul."

The occasion of lifting up the Big Dome as a time when Martin's very prime his prime as "Concert King" is not much of a bother for Martin, who turns 46 on Feb. 1.

"I've done this many times before," he reminds us. "There was a year when he sang six nights straight for Sundala. And two shows in the same venue, a matinee and an evening performance — both sold out. For a long time I didn't have to worry about ticket sales, or whether I can fill up any venue," Martin says. "I don't let it affect me now, but of course I also pursue and think that,

B CONCERT C4

Martin and sons will sing a song they wrote for... Pops

Good guys, amazing racers

By Ruth L. Navarro

THE "GOOD GUYS" FINISHED FIRST IN the recently concluded season 12 of 'Amazing Race' (aired on Studio 23).

Dating couple Thomas Ryle "TK" Evans, 22, and Rachel Beesley, 23, won the $1 million grand prize in a race around the world.

The couple had several close calls but their calm response each time ultimately worked to their favor.

"We have so many things in common [and] we always made the same decisions," says Rachel.

But that was not the only thing they brought to the race. TK says they learned a lot from previous seasons of TAR, that they discussed what strategies worked and what didn't.

"We noticed that most of the winners had one thing in common — they were enjoying themselves during the race," TK adds.

Tears

Prior to the competition, TK had traveled widely. Yet, he says, the novelty of traveling one under big airplanes on the road. Like he and Rachel had, losing a shoe in baby.

TK recounts: "We had driven 18 minutes before we realized we had lost our shoe. We had to go back and find it."

Rachel says they will use their prize money to travel some more, buy some cars and invest in the future—a fiance, she stresses, that has both of them in it.

"Rachel is a workaholic," says TK. "I'm happy because having [this much] money means she can take some time off."

Closest rivals

And TK and Rachel clashed at one point, the latter daughter vacation of Ron and Christina Hee would have snatched the prize. Ron and Chris' rebel handup have effect a great deal from the race. They started out with fast headed Ron-Jennifer nearly snapping at Chris. Gradually, he learned to trust his daughter and even allowed her to make decisions for the two of them.

"I realized she was an adult and I didn't mind that she took control," says Ron.

THOMAS Ryle Evans and Rachel Beesley

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

For her part, Chris made sure that her father was getting enough nourishment during the race.

With someone taking care of him, Ron had the time to take care of everybody else. One instance was caught on cam: first sharing a cookie with 10-year-old Sian during a road block in Japan.

The TAR experience has not ended for them. They recently auctioned off their "What's your daddy?" T-shirts online to benefit an orphanage in Bethlehem, West Africa, where they spent some time. Printed on the back of the shirts are Chinese characters that say "Tiger Father, Tiger Daughter."

Age at work

For the third season — grandson and grandfather Nick and Ron — the challenge was how to make age work for them.

"I have life experiences that Nick had to go through, like getting fish, walking the camel and all that stuff. Those helped us through," says the oldest racer to ever reach the final three.

Dan admits, though, that his passion took charge whenever the challenge involved technology, like computers and the Internet.

The worst part, he says, were the road blocks, "[when] one partner couldn't help the other and just had to wait." For Nick, it was exhaustion and lack of sleep.

"Looking back," says Nick, "I kinda wish I took notes. I [also] wish I had watched previous seasons. I know Nash and Chris were keeping a diary."